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chop talk

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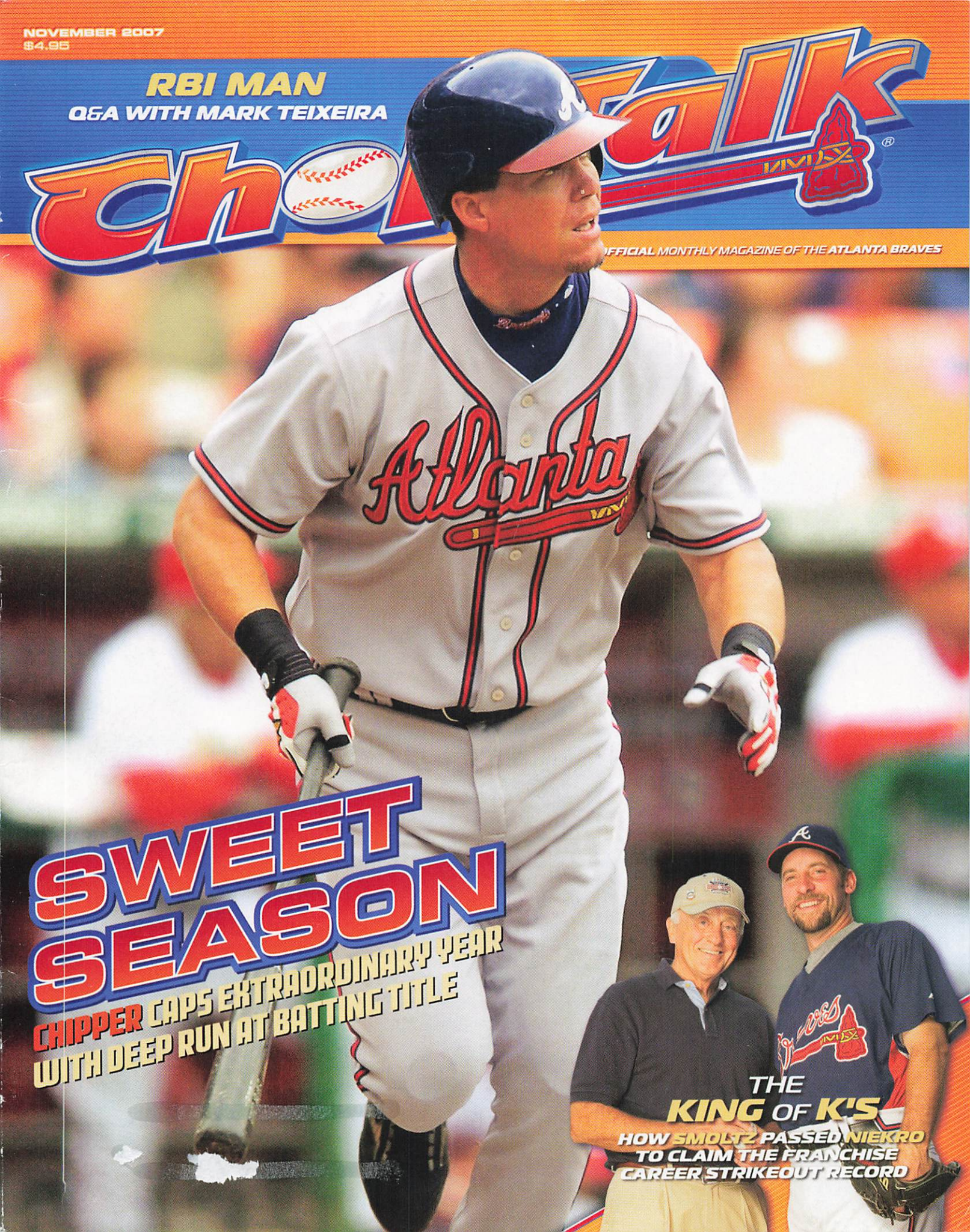

SWEET SEASON

CHIPPER CAPS EXTRAORDINARY YEAR WITH DEEP RUN AT BATTING TITLE

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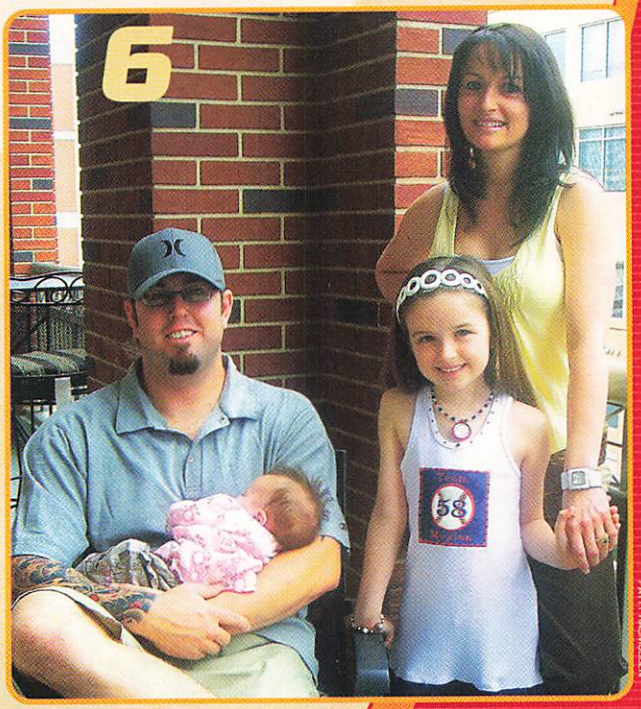

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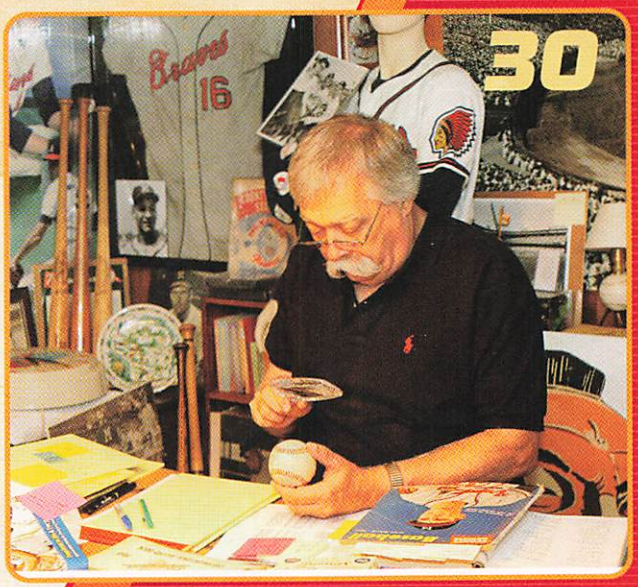

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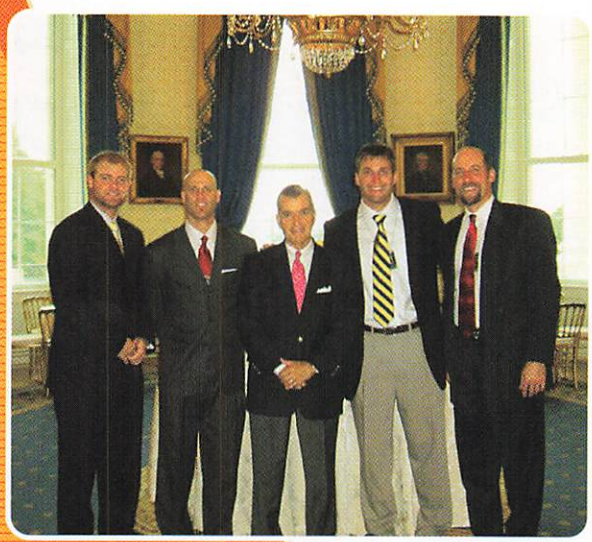

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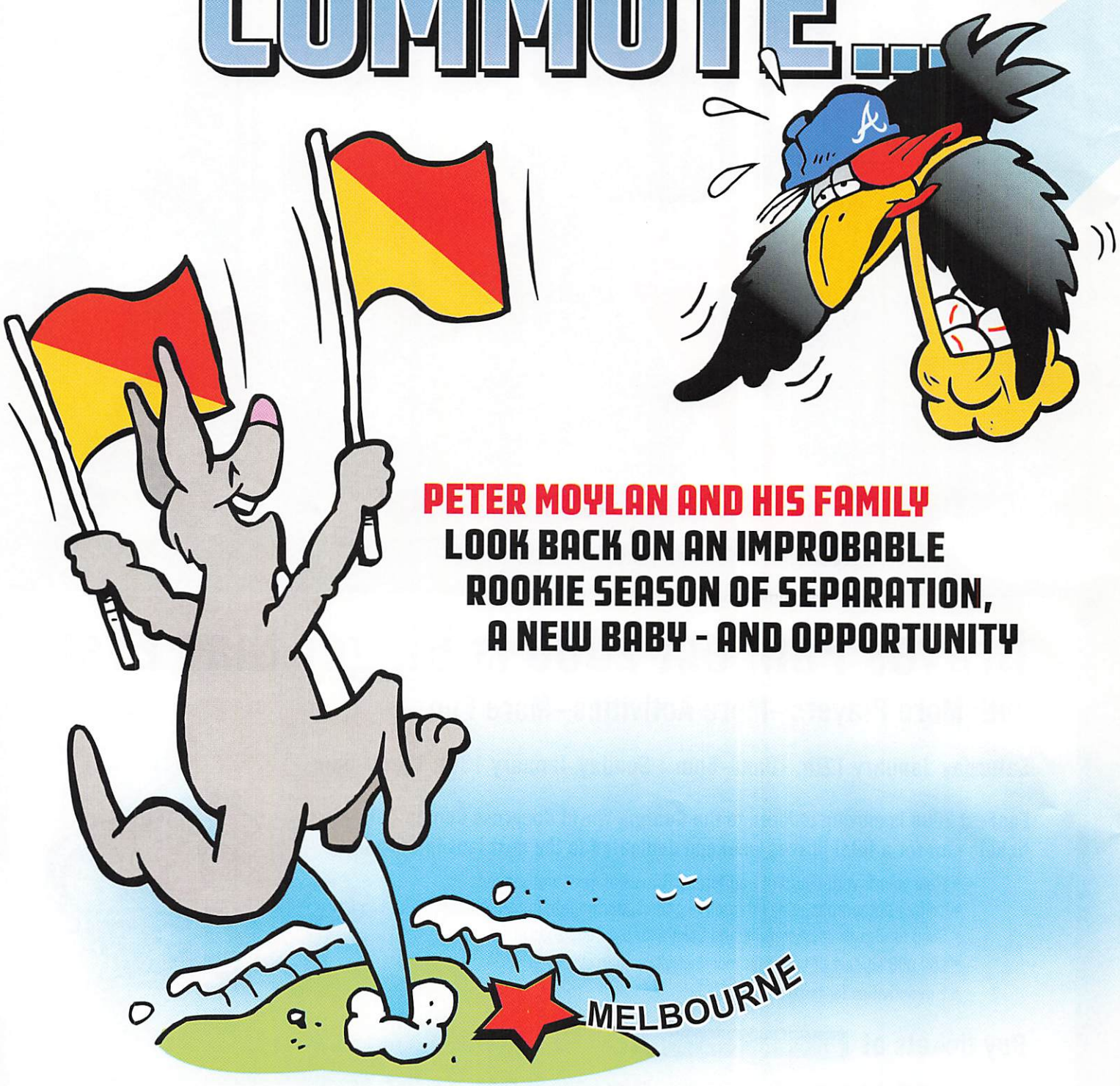
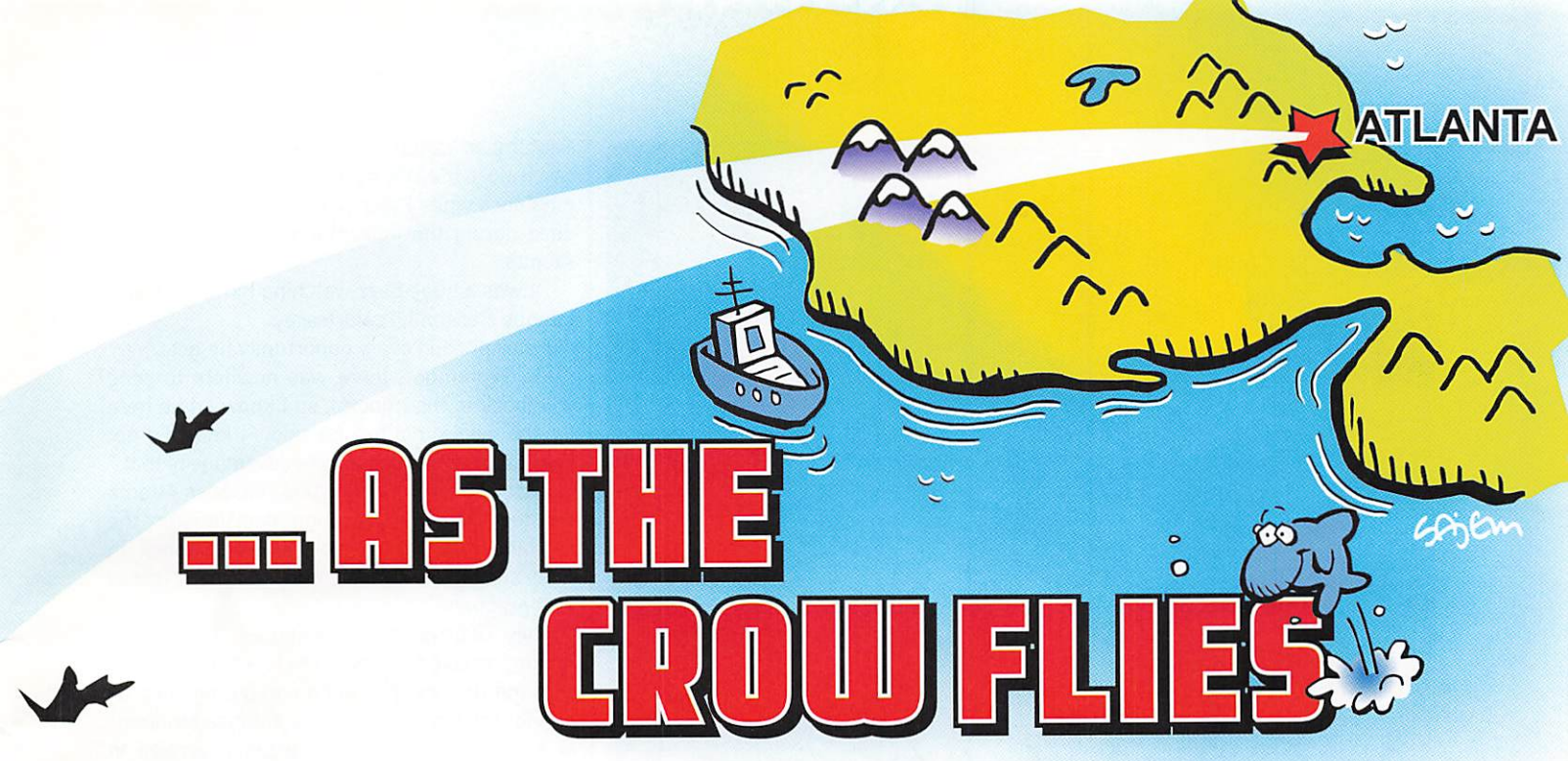
A 9,678-MILE COMMUTE...



PETER MOYLAN AND HIS FAMILY LOOK BACK ON AN IMPROBABLE ROOKIE SEASON OF SEPARATION, A NEW BABY - AND OPPORTUNITY



...AS THE CROW FLIES

BY PATTY RASMUSSEN

IF IT HAD BEEN A TELEVISION COMMERCIAL, the end of Peter Moylan's 2007 season might have been scripted like this: "Peter Moylan! You just finished your rookie season with a 1.80 ERA, a .208 opponents' batting average, five wins, and a save! What are you going to do now?"

His answer? "I'm taking my family to Disneyland!"

And that's exactly what Moylan did two days after the final game of the season. Peter, his wife Tracey, daughters Montana (6) and Matisse (2 months), and his "mum-in-law" Marlene White, packed their belongings and flew from Atlanta to Los Angeles where they spent another week in the United States visiting Disneyland and sightseeing before making the 16-hour flight covering 9,678 miles to their home in Victoria, Australia. There, after nearly nine months away from home, Moylan finally would be able to sleep in his own bed and spend time in his own home with the family he left behind in February in order to chase his baseball dream, a dream that was years and miles in the making.

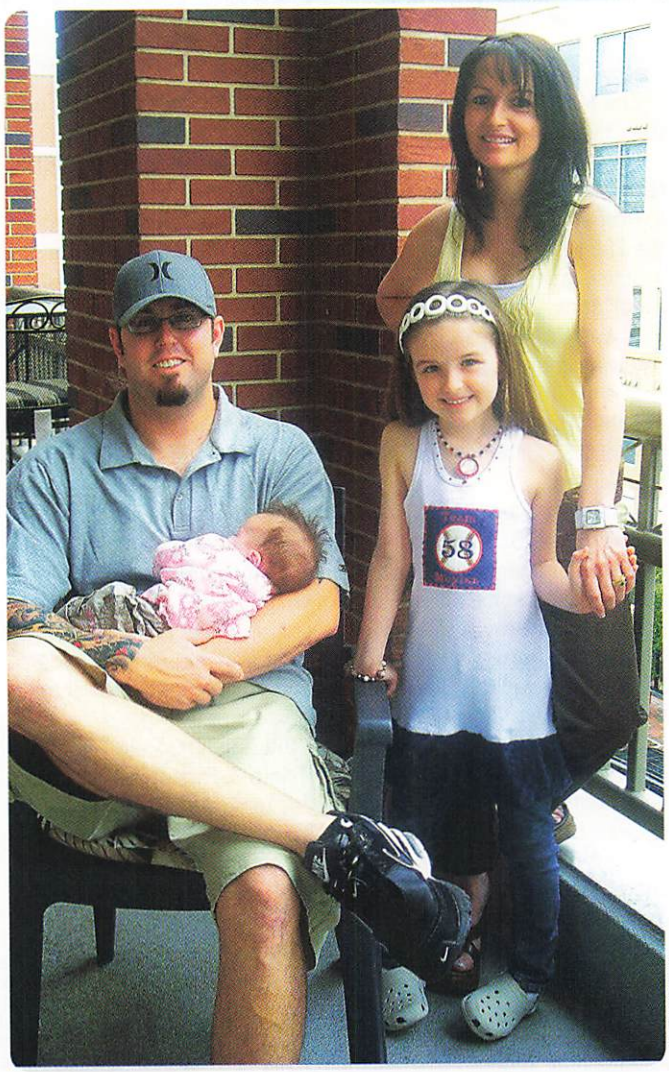
Signed as a minor league free agent by the Minnesota Twins in 1996, Moylan never got out of the Gulf Coast League and was released in April 1997. He headed back to Australia where he assumed he'd pick up his life where he left it. He met and married Tracey, found a job with a pharmaceutical company as a sales representative, and confined himself to playing club level baseball. The couple had their first child, Montana, in 2001. They moved from Sydney, in New South Wales, to Melbourne, in Victoria, eventually settling in the suburb of Vermont.

Tracey, a clinical cardiology specialist, trains physicians in the use of a device used to close openings between the left and right atrium in the heart.

"I travel all over Australia and sometimes overseas to conferences," she said. "Between our two jobs, we were making a nice living."

Nice enough to purchase a four-bedroom, two-bathroom home.

"We have an in-ground pool, and Montana's school is very good," said



PATTY RASMUSSEN

Peter and Tracey Moylan at their Midtown Atlanta loft with daughter Montana and baby Matisse.

PATTY RASMUSSEN

Tracey Moylan's mother, Marlene White, traveled with her to the States to help with Montana and Matisse.

Tracey. "We had a very nice life."

The Moylans had no idea that baseball was about to burst into their lives again.

"I was playing for my club team, but also for my state (Victoria) team," said Peter.

Preparations were being made to fill the Australia roster for the 2006 World Baseball Classic, and Moylan's pitching during a practice game opened eyes among Australian scouts holding radar guns.

"I was throwing 94 miles per hour and had no idea that I was throwing that hard," recalled Peter, whose switch to a sidearm delivery due to previous back problems added velocity to his pitches. After a tryout, he made the Australian team and was off to the U.S. for what was supposed to be a two-week baseball tournament.

Instead, he became a focus of attention for several teams, including the Braves. After a trip to Florida and a meeting with Braves management, Moylan chose to sign with the Braves for a number of reasons, not the least of which was his long-time relationship with Braves international scouting supervisor Phil Dale, who scouted prospects in the "Eastern (Pacific) Rim" for years. He also believed the Braves offered him his best shot for actually making the major league team.

On March 10, 2006, with Tracey's full support, Peter signed a minor league deal and headed to Triple-A Richmond. And just one month later, April 12, he made his major league debut when he was called up to replace Joey Devine who was experiencing back problems. With his family still in Australia, Moylan called to share the incredible news of his call up. Tracey's excitement matched his own.

"There were happy tears for both of us," he said.

Though he was sent back to Richmond 10 days later, he was brought up to Atlanta four more times, including his September callup. Tracey and Montana made two trips to the U.S. during the 2006 season, visiting once while Peter pitched in Richmond and once during the final month of the season in Atlanta.

"It was a huge buzz watching him play Major League Baseball," said Tracey.

Peter pitched every opportunity he got.

"In September, there was nowhere to send you (back to the minors), so I knew I'd be here for the whole month," he said. "I knew I'd get innings, and I needed to take advantage of that."

That last month of the 2006 season in Atlanta set the stage for a tough decision for the Moylans, made tougher still when, back in Australia in November, they learned Tracey was pregnant.

They realized that if Peter, a 28-year-old rookie, received an invitation to spring training with the Braves, it would mean a long separation for the family at a time of intense emotional stress. And when the invitation arrived in December, they'd made their decision.

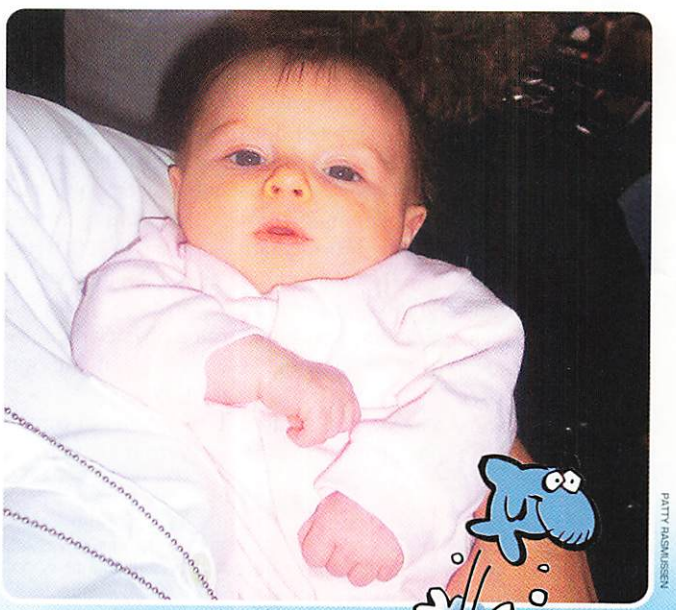
"I knew it was something I was going to have to try again," said Peter. "In order for this plan to work, we needed Tracey to keep working, because we didn't know where I was going to be all year."

A combination of factors - Tracey's pregnancy and July due date, the inability to predict where Peter would be during the season, and the need for Tracey to continue to work until her maternity leave started in June - meant when Peter left for the U.S. in February, the family would not be reunited until at least six weeks after the baby was born. Though he started the '07 season at Richmond again, Peter was called up to Atlanta on April 14 and never left.

"By the time we realized I was going to be (in Atlanta) all season, it was too late for Tracey to travel," he said.

Fortunately, Peter had the assurance that his wife was backing him, 100 percent.

"Her feeling was that this was something I needed to do which



PATTY RASMUSSEN

Matisse Moylan was born July 20 in Australia, but her dad didn't get to see her in person until Sept. 16 after she traveled 9,678 miles to Atlanta.

would be good for us in the long run," he said. "It made it easier during the season to know that she felt that way, because there were times, for both of us, when it was very difficult."

The family kept in constant contact throughout the long separation via telephone calls, e-mails, and a weekly pre-arranged Friday night webcam visit.

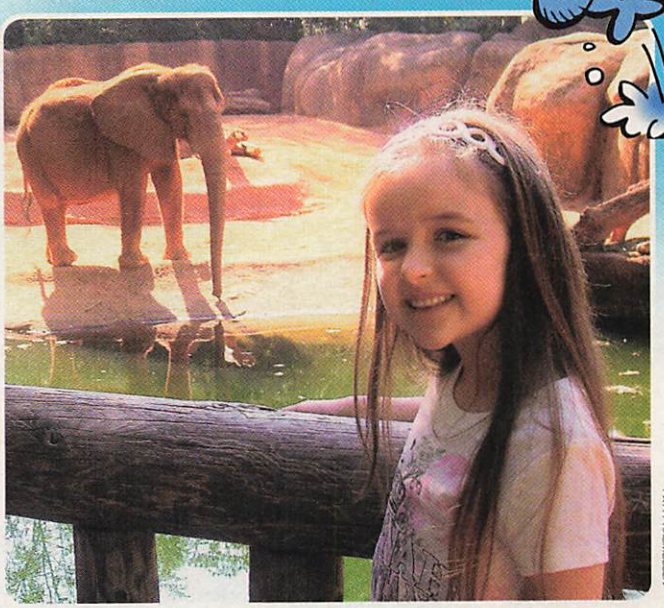
"Friday after the game here was Saturday after swimming there," said Peter.

During their webcam visits, Montana could actually see her father and show off her latest drawings or talent to him.

"We saw all his new tattoos," said Tracey, "and he'd say, 'Stand up and let me see your belly.' Even though it's not ideal for families to be apart, we all coped as well as could be expected."

Though most friends were supportive of what the Moylans were doing, they dealt with a few incredulous comments from outsiders.

"People would say, 'I can't believe you let your husband go so far away without you,'" recalled Tracey. "It wasn't really a matter of me letting him do something. It was about taking advantage of this opportunity. We felt as though we really didn't have a choice."



When the Braves went on the road for the last week of the season, Montana's introduction to Atlanta included a trip to the zoo.

PATTY RASMUSSEN

But even Peter had his occasional doubts, especially while he was in Richmond. When he got to Atlanta - and stayed - his resolve hardened.

"In those times, I had to tell myself that this was something we both talked about, so it was something I needed to see through, especially for this year," said Moylan. "I couldn't say, 'You know what, I'm done,' then try to pick up where I left off back home.

> **"(MISSING THEM) ALLOWED ME TO HAVE MORE MOTIVATION TO GO OUT AND SUCCEED."**
> **- PETER MOYLAN**

"(Missing them) allowed me to have more motivation to go out and succeed. If I left them at home and didn't give 100 percent, then what the heck was I doing here? Why put my family through it? When things got tough, when I'd give up a run, it was something to help me stay focused. This was what I had to do - be a professional."

Moylan needed every bit of professionalism on July 19 when he got the word prior to batting practice that Tracey had gone into labor. It was 4 a.m. on July 20, Australia time, when Tracey went to the hospital, but Peter was preparing to go to the bullpen for the game. He took his cell phone to the bullpen with him, but it wasn't until later the next day that he learned his daughter, Matisse, had been born after a long, difficult labor.

Tracey's mother was living with her and helped with some of the usual new baby transition and with getting organized for their trip to Atlanta in September. Peter found a larger place to live, a loft apartment in Atlantic Station in Midtown Atlanta, and filled out the paperwork at the Australian consulate to apply for Matisse's passport.

The payoff came on Sept. 16 when Moylan greeted his family after their long day of traveling, delayed flights, and missed connections.

"They got out of the car at the apartment," he said. "All I could think was, 'Wow! They're here.' No tears, just so happy to see them. It was really good."

Good, too, to hold two-month-old Matisse, for the first time.

"She was smiling up at her daddy the whole time," said Montana.

The family had little time to adjust to each other or to their surroundings. The Braves were still involved in trying to win the division, and Peter pitched nearly every night of their first week in Atlanta, the final homestand of the season Sept. 16-23. Montana quickly made friends with other children. Marlene marveled at the size of Turner Field, the enthusiasm of the crowds, and the Friday night fireworks. Between caring for the baby, driving to and from the ballpark, and trying to spend time with her husband, Tracey managed to link with other Braves wives in the stands, in the family room, and at a baby shower at Turner Field.

One week after the family arrived, Peter left for the final road trip of the season, while Tracey, Marlene, Montana and Matisse filled their days with visits to Zoo Atlanta, the Georgia Aquarium, shopping at Lenox Square Mall, and exploring the shops and side streets of Atlantic Station.

"We really enjoyed the zoo," said Tracey. "But we might have liked the aquarium even better. It's fantastic and even better than the ones we have at home."

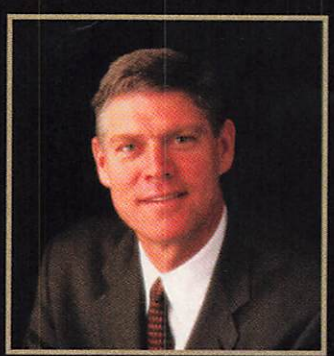
The emotions of the time apart, having a baby, the excitement of finally getting to the U.S. and seeing her husband, were overwhelming at times for Tracey. The process of reintegrating a family after a long separation follows an established series of emotional cycles, well documented by the U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion. As a family reintegrates, elation and euphoria are found in equal parts with overwhelming confusion. Fortunately, those mood swings are generally short lived as a family puts itself back together.

That's where the Moylans are now. Back in Australia, back in their own home, back to even more decisions for 2008. Will the family stay back again, or will they relocate to the U.S. for baseball?

"Making the decision we made (last season) was a hard decision, no matter what," said Peter. "Now that I've had the year I've had, I think it's proven to be the right decision, because who knows what's going to happen in the future. There are even more questions now, but given what's happened this year, the future looks brighter."

I WON'T CHEAT!

GAME | FANS | SELF



"Youth athletes who feel the pressure to cheat have been damaged the most by the steroid problem. Let's work together to create a drug free atmosphere in sports."

–Dale Murphy

2 TIME NL MVP, ATLANTA BRAVES

FOUNDER OF THE I WON'T CHEAT FOUNDATION

www.iwontcheat.com

PAINTING THE CORNERS

BY JAY BUSBEE

IF ONLY FOR A HIT HERE, A KEY PLAY THERE...

HERE'S A STRANGE THING. Why is it that at the end of the last two seasons, neither of which ended with the Braves in the post-season, I'm not ready to punch a bus, the way I was after almost all of the playoff losses?

Maybe it's the diminished expectations. Thanks to some disastrous months - June in 2006, August in 2007 - we had a pretty good idea the Braves weren't making the post-season. Compare that with the agony of Mets fans, who carried hopes into the final day of the season. Would you rather the end come quickly or painfully?

But maybe it's also the fact that even though the Braves have fallen short a second year in a row, this year it wasn't by much. A timely hit here, a key two-out play there, and you're looking at a whole new season.

So, let's not dwell on what could have been. Let's take a moment to wrap up the season with a look back at the high points, and how they bode well for 2008:

Tex: Any discussion of the Braves' 2007 has to start with Atlanta's best mid-season acquisition since Fred McGriff in 1993. Mark Teixeira arrived in Atlanta with astronomical expectations on his shoulders - and fulfilled every single one of them. His 56 RBIs in the 54 games for Atlanta kept the Braves in many a ballgame down the stretch. And he's all ours, at least for another year.

Chipper: For years, Chipper Jones told anyone who'd listen that he still had an MVP-caliber season in him. Most folks nodded politely at the idea but didn't really believe it. And when Chipper's Pittsburgh Flip in May put him on the DL again, well, most people figured Chipper was headed for another 110-game season. But he surprised everybody except himself by competing for the National League batting title until the season's very last day. Nobody's doubting Chipper's word again any time soon.

Yunel: Bobby Cox always likes the multi-position guys, the Pete Orrs and Chris Woodwards, who can do everything right up to selling hot dogs at Turner Field. So when Yunel Escobar showed up in June, straight off the plane from Mississippi, and began covering more of the infield than the grounds crew, hitting well over .300 all season, it wasn't just the fans who were all smiles.

ATLANTA BRAVES

Mark Teixeira (L) and Tim Hudson are two key performers who delivered in 2007 and are under contract for '08.

Diaz and KJ: In 2006, Matt Diaz showed some flair with the bat. Kelly Johnson showed absolutely nothing, because he was on the DL all year. But both cemented their place on the Braves in 2007, KJ with solid play all year long at second, Diaz with hit after clutch hit. They may not be the marquee names, but they're part of the reason the Braves were one of the best-hitting teams in the league.

Frenchy: Jeff Francoeur was well on his way to becoming a big-hit, no-walk one-note wonder until he began diversifying his game this year. He hit within sight of .300 with 19 homers and 105 RBIs. "The Natural" showed his career's still on the upswing.

Smoltz and Hudson: The two old pros pitched like the perennial All-Stars they are, Hudson finally returning to his Oakland A's-era form and Smoltz continuing his ageless Terminator routine. The rest of the rotation? Well, let's not focus on that too much, except to say that Chuck James and Jo-Jo Reyes showed flashes of genuine potential by the end of the season.

The bullpen: It wasn't flawless, but no bullpen is. This year's model blew only 15 saves, half as many as last year's devastating and league-low 29. And with Mike Gonzalez back next season to join Rafael Soriano and Peter Moylan, Atlanta fans can feel more confident about the back half of the relief corps than they have in years.

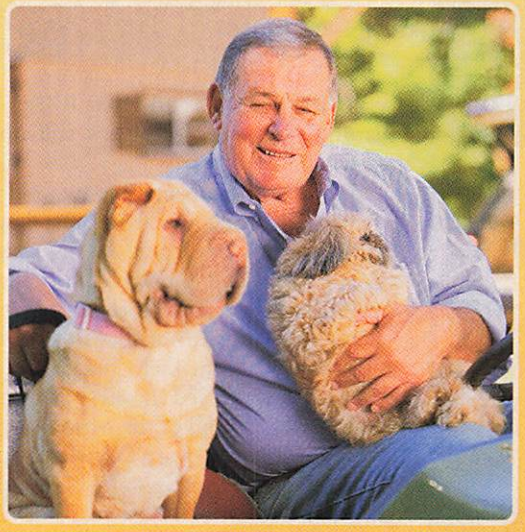
Andruw: Yes, it was Andruw's worst season at the plate. And yes, he's now a free agent. But he continued to make those astonishing catches in center. When he reeled in a game-saving, eighth-inning catch at home against Milwaukee late in the season, fans stood and cheered in appreciation for a decade of singular glovework.

> "MARK TEIXEIRA ARRIVED IN ATLANTA WITH ASTRONOMICAL EXPECTATIONS ON HIS SHOULDERS - AND FULFILLED EVERY SINGLE ONE OF THEM."

You: More than 2.7 million fans saw the Braves play in Atlanta this season, the most since 2001. Maybe we stopped taking this whole post-season thing for granted. Maybe we began appreciating the likely Hall of Famers in our midst. And maybe it's taken us this long to figure out how to get to Turner Field before the sixth inning. Whatever, you've killed that whole fair-weather-fan nonsense. Nice work.

Now, see if you can beat that in 2008, okay? See you at the ballpark in April.

BOBBY'S CAUSE



COLBY KIZO

Bobby Cox - on his farm north of Atlanta with his Shih Tzu, Rosa (R), and his Shar-Pei, Sassy - will be raising funds for homeless pets Nov. 17 at Turner Field.

SO, WITH BRAVES FanFest scheduled at the Georgia World Congress Center this winter (Jan. 12-13), you thought there might not be a reason to go back to Turner Field until the spring. Well, think again. Bobby Cox and his wife, Pam, are hosting their third annual fundraiser for homeless pets on Nov. 17 in the 755 Club from 8 p.m.-Midnight.

Bobby Cox Paws Because "Bets for Pets Casino Night" is scheduled to begin with two hours of casino games. That will be followed by silent and live auctions from 10-10:30 p.m., then dancing from 10:30-12.

Activities will include casino-style games such as blackjack, dice and roulette, interactive and arcade-style games such as billiards, air hockey, golf and stock car simulators. Food will be served, and trips to Napa Valley, Montana (fly fishing) and Colorado (big game hunting) will be auctioned off.

Dress is cocktail attire. Cox will attend, and the possibility exists that some players and coaches will be there, too. However, organizers are requesting "no autographs or pictures."

Individual tickets are $100. Visit homelesspets.com to get a mail-in ticket order form, call (770) 845-9191, or e-mail CoxPawsBecause-@yahoo.com. Donations also can be made with checks payable to Homeless Pets Foundation and sent to: Bobby Cox Paws Because, P.O. Box 277, Turin, Ga. 30289.

All proceeds benefit the Homeless Pets Foundation, a non-profit organization that provides critical medical care, food, and foster care to homeless animals. In five years, the organization has found homes for nearly 1,000 animals.

CARD OF THE MONTH

EAT YOUR HEART OUT, Topps, Fleer and Upper Deck! When it comes to the most innovative card set of the year, the Wisconsin Historical Museum (WHM) beat you to the punch.

Instead of featuring one card this month, we're featuring two sets totaling 96 cards produced by the WHM, located in the Wisconsin capitol of Madison, to commemorative the 50th anniversary of the 1957 World Champion Milwaukee Braves. Each of the two sets contains 48 cards of classic black-and-white photos. Set 1 is bordered in blue, and Set 2 is bordered in red.

For younger fans that aren't familiar with the '57 Braves, collecting these cards is an entertaining way to learn about one of the greatest chapters in franchise history. And for those fans already versed in the accomplishments of the '57 team, these cards offer a unique way to relive the memories of all aspects of that remarkable season.

For instance, the "coolest" card may be the one that shows Lou Burdette's neighbors standing in front of his modest home (L), which they have decorated for his return from Game 7 in New York. But this card has plenty of competition. Naturally, there are cards of all the star players, but it's those such as Ty Cobb giving tips to Hank Aaron and other players that makes these two sets a "must have" for all collectors. There's a card of the famous "black shoe polish" incident, and even a few with color images of memorabilia, including a nice shot of the World Champions ring.

These two sets are perfect stocking stuffers for the holidays and sell for just $9.95 per set plus shipping. That's about 21 cents per card - quite a bargain. Visit wisconsinhistory.org /museum and click on "shop" to order, or call toll-free 1-888-999-1669.

AFTER tbs

BRAVES FANS are about to enter a new chapter titled "Life After TBS." It's a fact: Braves games no longer will be televised nationally on TBS. However, it's also a fact that just about everyone - no matter where they live - will still be able to see all (or nearly all) games on television next season.

Many fans outside the Southeast already had begun adapting by using alternative sources when TBS started phasing out the Braves in recent years. There are two main possibilities that most fans should be able to access for a relatively small fee. The Major League Baseball Extra Innings package, available via DirecTV and some cable carriers, offers all MLB games (local blackout rules apply) for $199 per year. And MLB.com offers telecasts of all MLB games (local blackout rules apply) via the internet for just $29.95 per year.

Though details are still in the works, fans in the Southeast likely will continue to receive all games, primarily via SportSouth, FSN South, and national carriers ESPN, Fox, and TBS, which will have a new Sunday afternoon game chosen from among all teams.

Those fans located outside the Southeast, however, likely will have to subscribe to DirecTV and/or MLB.com. And remember all games are available nationally on radio via XM Radio and MLB.com's Gameday Audio.

Make your plans now so you won't miss a Braves game in 2008.

HOW DO THEY DO THAT?

DISPLAY ANIMATION

ALLISON SHIRREFFS

EVEN WHEN THE BRAVES take a break between innings, fans at Turner Field stay entertained by watching the BravesVision Board. Animated features like "The Home Depot Tool Race" and "NAPA Cap Shuffle" have been a hit for years.

The Home Depot Tool Race was developed by an outside company called Jaminations. Most of the other animated features come from Dimension X Design (DXD), and get produced before the season starts. Some sponsors establish the direction for animated features, while others ask the Braves for input.

The Braves provide DXD with specifications for both their animated features and basic graphics package, which consists of the scoreboards' general look and theme. DXD also creates an opening animation that gets shown before each home game. It combines live video, still images, and 3D animation. After they receive rough drafts, the Braves edit and change the features as they see fit.

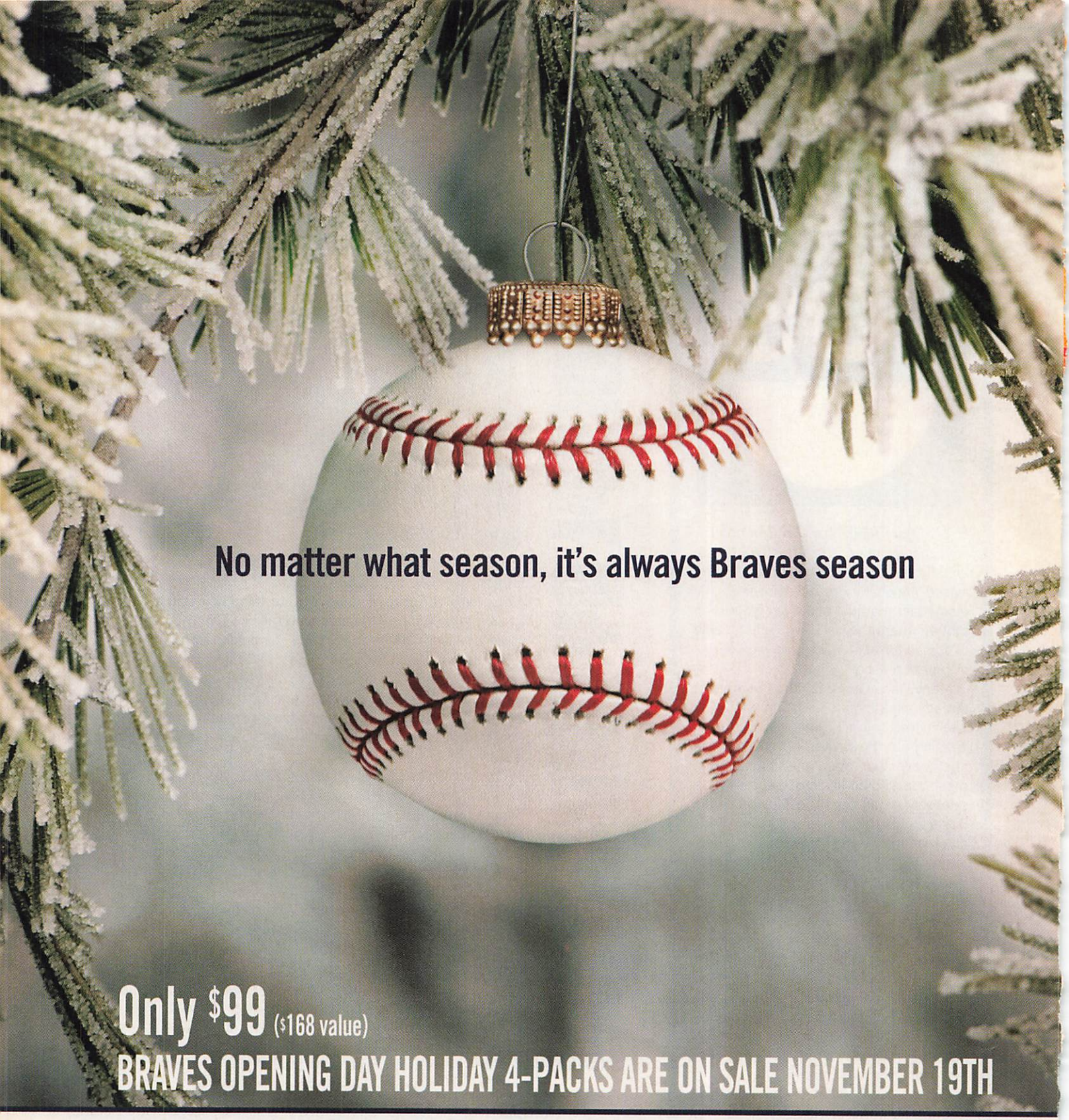
For just one short sponsored animated feature, as many as 15 people must coordinate their activities during the game.

Braves' technical director Michael Farnsworth first cues a playback computer to roll something called a bumper: A short introduction that shows both the sponsor and name of the feature. He then pushes buttons to change the video on the BravesVision Board from whatever it was showing to the animated feature.

At the same time, Farnsworth cues the audio booth to raise the sound level. That way everyone hears the animation's effects. He also prepares the cameramen - because the Braves show the host in a graphical window during the feature.

"Between the control room staff, the audio staff out in the seating area, and the cameras, there is a lot of coordination going on at the same time to trigger one of those features," said Matt Montemayor (above), the Braves production manager.

— STEVE FALL



Only $99 ($168 value)

BRAVES OPENING DAY HOLIDAY 4-PACKS ARE ON SALE NOVEMBER 19TH

The holiday ticket package comes with tickets* to 4 games including Opening Day. Plus, two adult one day passes to the 2008 Braves FanFest and a voucher for a gift, sent in a commemorative Braves holiday envelope.

March 31 VS Pittsburgh Pirates April 5 VS New York Mets May 3 VS Cincinnati Reds May 17 VS Oakland A's

*Two Upper Box seats

Give the gift of Braves baseball. For tickets call 404.577.9100 or visit braves.com/holiday

Braves

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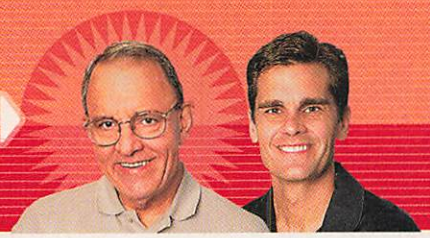


END OF THE TBS ERA INVOKES MANY MEMORIES

THEY'VE ASKED ME TO REMINISCE about 30-plus years of Braves baseball on TBS, and that I will try to do.

What I do remember are all the announcers I was privileged to work with during the TBS era that began in 1976.

Of course, I have to start with Braves Hall of Famer **Ernie Johnson**, the big brother I never had.

I remember the first game I did with Ernie. It was a Twins-Braves exhibition game in Orlando. **Pete Van Wieren** did the game on radio, and Ernie and I were on television. Ernie was the number-one guy, which meant that I did all the pre-game jabbering and then turned it over to him for the play-by-play.

I did that... then said.... "And now, here with the play-by-play story... the voice of the Braves, Ernie Johnson."

When the half inning ended, he put his arm around me and said, "If you don't mind, don't call me that. We are all the 'voices of the Braves.' I knew that day that I had made a friend for life, and indeed I had.

I found out later how abominably Milo Hamilton (Braves broadcaster 1966-75) treated Ernie before he got fired, and Ernie made up his mind he would never treat anyone like that. And he never did.

That brings us to the aforementioned Pete Van Wieren. We've been together for 32 years, and we are still partnering on Braves Radio for most of the games. Pete is a great guy and a consummate professional as an announcer. His passion for the game and for the Braves is tremendous, as is his encyclopedic knowledge of the game itself.

Ernie labeled him "The Professor" because of his quest for learning about baseball, and it's an apt nickname. He does a great job on hockey, football and basketball, too.

One other thing: While Pete's almost always dead serious when he's on the air, he possesses one of the best and driest senses of humors I have ever been around.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Skip Caray and Chip Caray alternate months in this space, so watch for Chip in December. Skip will be back here in January.

Darrell Chaney: Darrell, a former major league infielder who played for the Braves from 1976-79, had never done any broadcasting when he hired on with us. He improved dramatically every day and was always asking how he could get better. The suits who ran the company kept telling him he was doing great. Then they fired him without any cause. It was my first lesson in not believing everything executives in our business tell you.

Billy Sample: A former major league outfielder who played for the Braves in 1986, Billy would have been a lot better in the studio than he was in the booth. He's one of the brightest men I know, but he was a guy who took a little time to frame his responses... time you don't have when you are doing the game.

In the studio, with time to prepare his remarks, he would have been brilliant - but Billy was with us before we had all the pre- and post-game programs they have today. Too bad.

John Sterling: John was my partner on Hawks basketball, as well as on Braves baseball way back when, and he is one of the most delightful people I've ever been around, with a distinct style.

After a few years with us, John moved on to become the voice of the Yankees on radio, where he has flourished and carved out a great career. He's still a good friend.

Don Sutton: I learned more about pitching from working with Don than I did in all my other baseball experiences. I always thought he was - and is - as good an analyst as is working today. I thought they hurt him by trying to make a play-by-play man out of him when he was so good at the other - but that's television today and the geniuses who run it. Don is doing very well analyzing Washington Nationals games these days.

Joe Simpson: I missed working with him under the new arrangement last year. Joe's career is just taking off with the playoff games on TBS, and I am truly happy for him.

Chip Caray: I love him as an announcer and, more importantly, as a man and a son. I can't say much more than that.

That has been our cast of characters for the last 30 years. I have enjoyed working with each and every one of them.

KYB KNOW YOUR BRAVES

RON MAHAY #49

2007 STATISTICS * COMBINED TEXAS AND ATLANTA

W-L	ERA	G	SV	IP	H	R	ER	HR	BB	SO
3-0	2.62	56	1	65.1	51	20	19	4	37	55

BASICS

FULL NAME	RONALD MATTHEW MAHAY
POSITION	Relief Pitcher
VITALS	Bats/Throws Left/Left Height 6-2 Weight 190 Age 36
BORN	June 28, 1971 Crestwood, Ill.
CONTRACT	Elligible for free agency.
ACQUIRED	Via trade from Texas, along with Mark Teixeira, on July 31, 2007, in exchange for Jarrod Saltalamacchia, Elvis Andrus, Neftali Feliz, Matt Harrison and Beau Jones.
PERSONAL	Married (Allison); Two daughters (Madison and Mackenzie) and a son (Mason).

CAREER

SOUTHSIDER
Hails from Chicago, where he grew up as a White Sox fan (favorite player Harold Baines) and attended South Suburban College.

EXTRA! EXTRA!
Appeared in several episodes of the soap opera All My Children as an "extra," a gig arranged by his wife, who worked on the show.

DEBUT #1
An outfielder for first five pro seasons, made big league debut for Red Sox on May 19, 1995, going 2-for-5 with an RBI. First hit came off Bud Black, now the Padres' manager.

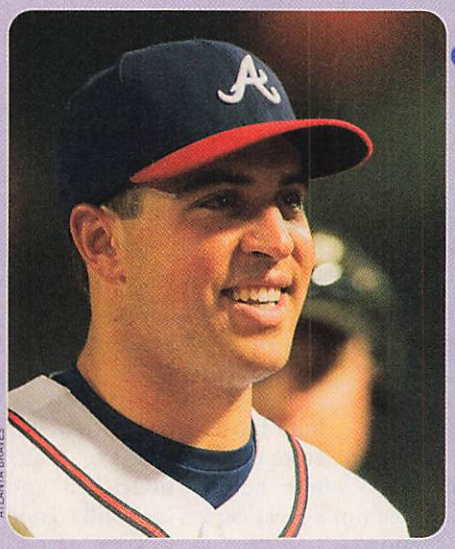
THE OL' SWITCHEROO
Made second big league debut - as a pitcher - for Red Sox on July 17, 1997, striking out first man he faced (Baltimore's Roberto Alomar) and getting credit for the victory with one inning of work.

PHOTO

ALLISON SHIRREFFS

PLAYING PEPPER

MARK TEIXEIRA



ATLANTA BRAVES

Teixeira, who holds the all-time season record for RBIs by a switch-hitter (144 in 2005), drove in 56 runs in his first 54 games as a Brave.

INTERVIEW BY PATTY RASMUSSEN

CHOPTALK Your name was tossed around a lot at trade deadline time. What was your reaction when you heard "Atlanta"?

MARK TEIXEIRA I was excited. There are a lot of teams you may not want to be traded to, but Atlanta was definitely a team I was happy to come play for. I was here for college at Georgia Tech and even spent a year (living) here after college. That made the comfort level that much greater. My wife, Leigh, and her family are from (Georgia, Habersham County north of Atlanta), and we both went to school here and still have friends living in Atlanta.

CT What was your impression when you arrived? It seemed like a pretty seamless adjustment, as if you'd always been here.

TEIXEIRA No one has ever said something bad about the Braves organization, and I'm being completely honest. The reaction I've had from teammates, coaches, fans, was what I expected. I knew a few of the guys. I played with Jeff Francoeur and Chipper Jones in the World Baseball Classic (2006), and I'd played against Matt Diaz in the American League and even played against him in college when he was at Florida State University. I knew a few other guys just from being around the game. They've all been great.

CT Until the trade, you'd always played in the American League. Were there any surprises coming to the National League?

TEIXEIRA The toughest thing is facing relievers I don't know. I only get to face them once a game, and not knowing their pitches has been a bit of an adjustment.

CT How do you approach that unknown, like pitchers and their stuff? Do you watch a lot of tape? Focus on the game from the dugout?

TEIXEIRA Watching tape only does so much. Until you're actually up there, you don't know what that pitch is going to do. The best thing to do is to concentrate on the strike zone and only swing at strikes. There's definitely a "book" on hitters, and it's easier (for pitchers) to pitch to hitters they don't know rather than (hitters) facing a pitcher they don't know. With pitchers, it's all their arm angles, their speed, their delivery, what their pitches do - sinking, cutting. There are a lot of factors that go into it.

> "I LIKE TO PLAY GOLF AND LIE AROUND AND WATCH FOOTBALL ON WEEKENDS. I'M JUST A NORMAL GUY."

CT So what's the biggest difference for you, and have you enjoyed playing in the NL?

TEIXEIRA It's a different game. There's more bunting, more substitutions and I think the game is much more fun in the NL. Games are shorter, and there's more strategy. I like it.

CT How would you describe yourself away from the game, off the field?

TEIXEIRA I'm very laid back. I don't go out. When I have free time, I spend it with my family. I like to play golf and lie around and watch football on weekends. I'm just a normal guy.

CT Which do you prefer, college or pro football?

TEIXEIRA More college than NFL, but once the playoffs start, I really lock in on the NFL.

CT Do you have a favorite NFL team? You grew up in the Baltimore area...

TEIXEIRA When you live in Dallas for five years, it's tough not to be a Cowboys fan! We didn't have a team (in Baltimore) when I grew up. The Ravens didn't get there until I was in college.

CT What about the Washington Redskins?

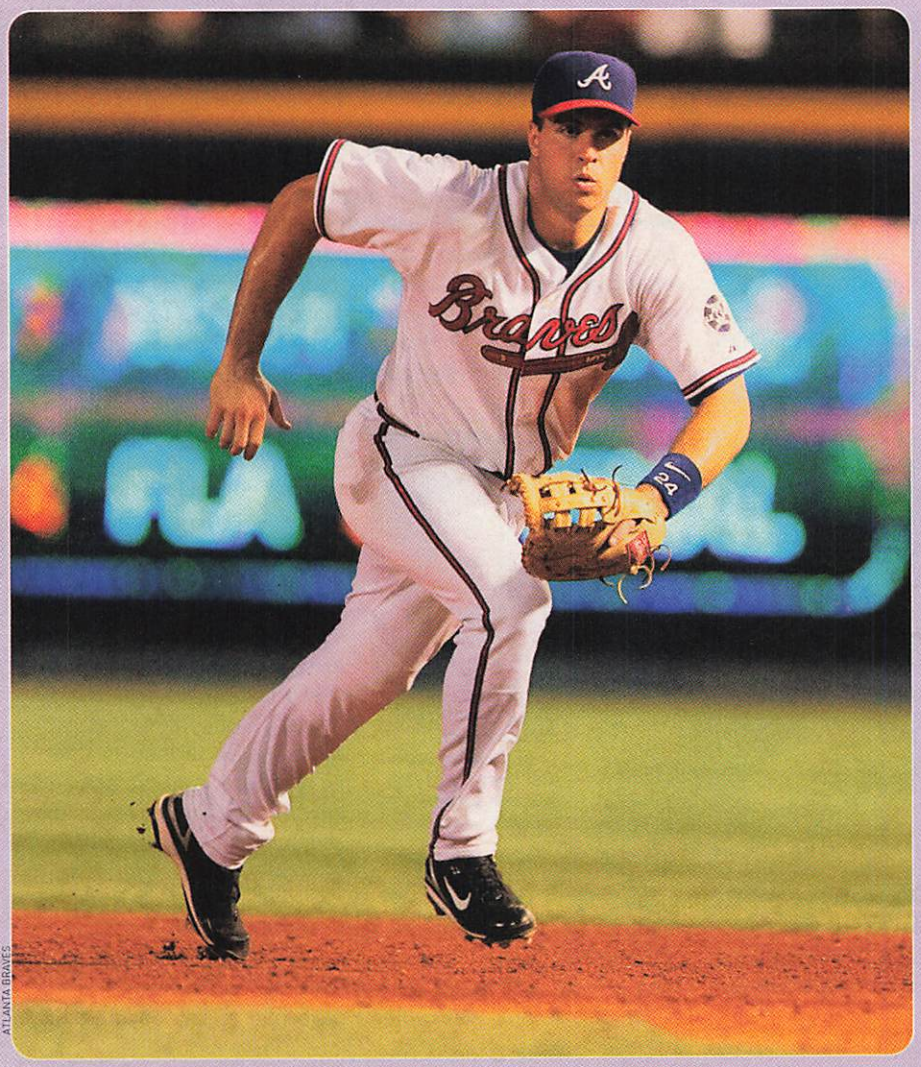
TEIXEIRA Even though Baltimore and Washington are separated by 30 miles, they really are worlds apart! I don't think I've ever cheered for the Redskins!

CT What else do you enjoy doing when you've got down time?

TEIXEIRA I love movies. I do more movies at home now because we have children, but my wife and I love catching up on movies. I'm a big fan of mysteries, solving-a-crime type movies. Movies that make you think are fun to me.

CT Do you enjoy reading?

TEIXEIRA I do. I actually read more during the season when we're on flights and on the road. I read and like all non-fiction. I like history, reading biographies, mainly to learn about the times and places when people lived. I read a biography of Charles Lindbergh and Howard Hughes. I read about baseball players - Joe DiMaggio and Lou Gehrig. The last really good book I read was Howard Hughes: His Life and Madness. The reason I read it was because I'd seen the movie, "The Aviator." It was a great movie, and then I picked up the book and it was fantastic. (Hughes') life is pretty amazing.



ATLANTA BRAVES

Teixeira, who comes from a military background, says he probably would have attended the U.S. Naval Academy if he hadn't pursued a baseball career.

CT You lived in the Annapolis, Maryland area. Was your dad in the military?
TEIXEIRA Yes, he was in the Navy and went to the Naval Academy (USNA).

CT Did you move around a bit as a kid, or was that before your time?
TEIXEIRA I lived in Maryland my whole life. The Navy life was before my time. We basically had a "normal" life growing up. I did go to a bunch of Navy football games, basketball games, a few baseball games. We were definitely involved in Navy sports.

CT Did you consider attending any of the service academies?
TEIXEIRA I did until I realized that baseball could be a future for me. If I hadn't wanted to play Major League Baseball, I definitely would have looked at going to the (Naval) Academy, because it's a solid education and the military commitment aspect didn't concern me. I know what (being in the military) did for my father and my uncles, who also went to military academies (USNA and the Air Force Academy). Once I started getting recruited by colleges and pro scouts, I knew I'd probably go to college somewhere other than an academy.

CT: You ended up at Georgia Tech, a school with a well-respected baseball program, but also an academically challenging school. What did you study?
TEIXEIRA My major was business management which was - I don't want to say the easiest, because it wasn't easy - but the least-intimidating major at Tech. The math and science classes were pre-cursers to the engineering courses. The science courses at Tech are very tough. Leigh really helped me out with technology. We had an information technology class where she helped, as well as the economics classes that used computers (where) she had to help me out.

CT How did you and Leigh meet?
TEIXEIRA We met at a party on campus. As soon as I met her, I knew I wasn't going to let her go! That was at the end of my freshman year, and we dated the whole time through college. We got married in December 2002.

CT How old is your son, Jack?
TEIXEIRA He's 19 months, and our daughter is due in (early November).

CT You live in Texas in the off-season?
TEIXEIRA Right. We live in Westlake, Texas, about 30 minutes from Arlington. We're planning to stay there for the foreseeable future. We love where we live. For now, with two little ones, it's too crazy to be moving. We like our home, and we have great friends. So, for now, that's where we'll stay.

CT Who's your best friend in baseball?
TEIXEIRA David Dellucci (Cleveland leftfielder). I played two years with him in Texas (2004-2005). We still keep in contact and try to see each other as much as we can.

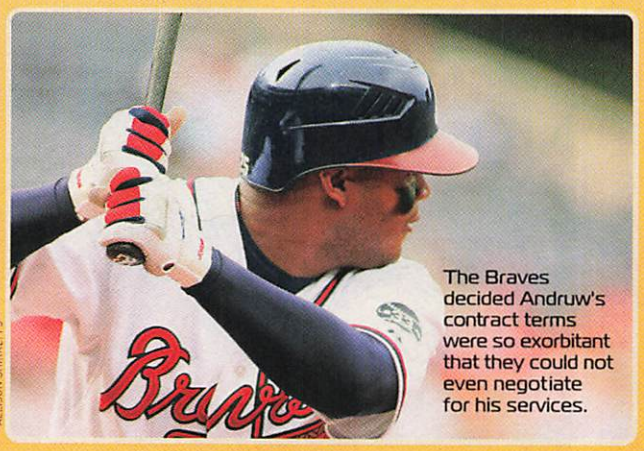
CT Other than welcoming a new baby, do you and Leigh have any plans for this off-season?
TEIXEIRA That's pretty much the plan! I need to spend time with the family, relax, and work out. I'll play some golf. I'll visit family a little bit, or they'll come to us.

ANDRUW JONES WILL HAVE TO MINE GOLD ELSEWHERE

ANDRUW JONES, who set a franchise record with 51 home runs in 2005 when he was named Major League Baseball Player of the Years by his peers but fell to a .222 average in 2007, will not be a Brave in 2008, according to **John Schuerholz**'s announcement on Oct. 2.

Andruw is eligible for free agency, and Schuerholz told him and the media that the team will not attempt to re-sign him, primarily due to the financial package he is seeking that reportedly is a multi-year deal in the range of $20 million per season.

Jones, of course, is regarded as one of the finest defensive outfielders in the game, and perhaps of all-time. He won his ninth straight Gold Glove last year and is favored to win a 10th this off-season. However, his .222 batting average was a 40-point drop from the .262 he hit in 2006 and a 45-point drop from his .267 career average entering 2007. He had 26 home runs and 94 RBIs this season, down from 41 and 129 a year ago.



ALLISON SHIRREFFS

The Braves decided Andruw's contract terms were so exorbitant that they could not even negotiate for his services.

About his private conversation with Jones, Schuerholz said, "I've known Andruw since he was a young guy. It was personally profound, but you can't get sentimental in this business and in this job especially.

"We have to make judgments about what's best for our team. I like Andruw. I always have. He's a winner, loves to play hard, loves to produce. But it was the right thing to do."

Schuerholz said he received an e-mail last Dec. 11 from Andruw's agent, **Scott Boras**, outlining the type of contract they were seeking. He said it was regarded as out of the realm of possibility for the Braves at that time, and when no new terms were outlined in the ensuing months, the decision was obvious in light of other contractual obligations the Braves face in 2008.

"It (contract terms Andruw was seeking) was so far removed from what we would have considered doing," Schuerholz said. "I think we made it (decision) some time ago, but finally admitted it when we got off the plane from Houston (end of the season)."

Asked what went into the decision, Schuerholz said, "A lot of things go into the analysis and evaluation. You can't extract one element (like this year's batting average). It's a whole canvas of considerations and performance - his body of work over his career, how much it would cost us to keep him. It's all important."

Andruw, who made his big league debut in 1996 at age 19, will be 31 in April. He was signed as a non-drafted free agent out of Curacao in 1993.

Schuerholz summed up the financial reality attached to running a team with many stars by saying, "In a perfect world, which this is not, we wouldn't have had to say goodbye to **Rafael Furcal**, **Javy Lopez**, **Kevin Millwood**, **Greg Maddux**, **Tom Glavine**, and on and on. This is not a perfect world. We're doing the best we can, and we feel good about what we've done. We believe this decision addresses that."

MR. CLUTCH

Mark Teixeira averaged more than an RBI per game in his two months with the Braves (56 RBIs in 54 games), and as a result, he is one of six nominees for the Major League Baseball Clutch Performer of the Year Award presented by Pepsi. The winner was to be announced Oct. 24 after online fan voting. The other nominees were **Ryan Howard**, **J.J. Putz**, **Jake Peavy**, **Aramis Ramirez** and **Alex Rodriguez**. Teixeira finished with 105 RBIs combined with Texas and Atlanta, his fourth straight season of 100 or more RBIs.

CONTRACT WATCH

As usual, arbitration and free agency will have a significant impact on which players return to the Braves next season. The club quickly decided it could not afford to keep **Andruw Jones**. Others who are eligible for free agency include **Julio Franco**, **Octavio Dotel**, **Chris Woodward** and **Ron Mahay**. Additionally, several key players are eligible for arbitration, which could result in one or more being non-tendered. The arbitration-eligible players include **Mark Teixeira**, **Mike Gonzalez**, **Rafael Soriano**, **Matt Diaz**, **Oscar Villarreal**, **Tyler Yates**, **Willie Harris** and **Lance Cormier**.

FINAL TALLY

Chipper Jones (.337) and **Edgar Renteria** (.332) finished second and fourth in the National League batting race won by Colorado's **Matt Holliday** (.340). It was the

strongest run at the batting title by Braves teammates since 1972 when **Ralph Garr** (.325) and **Dusty Baker** (.321) finished second and third behind the Cubs' **Billy Williams** (.333). In 1966, the Braves' first year in Atlanta, **Felipe Alou** (.327) and **Rico Carty** (.326) finished second and third behind Pittsburgh's **Matty Alou** (.342). In 1964, Carty (.330), **Hank Aaron** (.328) and **Joe Torre** (.321) were second, third and fourth behind Pittsburgh's Roberto Clemente (.339).

Kelly Johnson finished third in the league in triples (10). Chipper also was fourth in slugging percentage, fourth in on-base percentage, first in combined slugging and on-base (1.029 OPS), and eighth in runs (108). **Jeff Francoeur** tied for ninth in hits (188).

Among pitching leaders, **John Smoltz** tied for second in quality starts (26), was third in strikeouts (197), and was fourth in ERA (3.11). **Tim Hudson** tied for fifth in wins (16), was third in innings (224 1/3), and seventh in ERA (3.33).

ON THE MOVE

The Braves purchased the contract of outfielder **Brandon Jones** from Richmond Sept. 16 and designated outfielder **T.J. Bohn** for assignment. Bohn was later claimed by the Phillies.

On Sept. 18, the Braves optioned Brandon Jones back to Richmond, then recalled him the next day when they also recalled **Joey Devine** from Triple-A and purchased the contract of righthander **Jeff Bennett** from Richmond. Righthander **Kevin Barry** was designated for assignment, cleared waivers, and was assigned to Richmond.

Reliever **Octavio Dotel** was activated from the disabled list Sept. 20 after missing six weeks with a triceps strain.

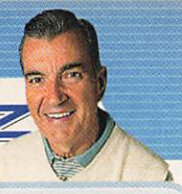
DISCIPLINED!

Rafael Soriano was suspended four games and fined $1,500 by the commissioner's office for intentionally hitting Florida's **Dan Uggla** Sept. 17. Soriano said it was not intentional and appealed, resulting in the suspension being reduced to two games and the fine cut to $1,000. He served the suspension Sept. 28-29.

SHORT HOPS

- The Braves were officially eliminated from the division race Sept. 27 in 6-4 loss at Philadelphia in the 159th game of the year.

JOHN
SCHUERHOLZ
GENERAL MANAGER



IT BECAME CLEAR THAT WE COULDN'T KEEP ANDRUW

IN GENERAL, WE HAVE PRIDE in the effort and the accomplishment of our team, along with the disappointment and frustration of not having won again. We thought we had a good team going into spring training, good enough to get to the playoffs. We didn't, though we only came five wins short of winning our division and four games short of the wild card.

We were really proud of the effort of our guys all year long, especially the way they came on at the end. They showed a lot of spirit and toughness.

We were excited about Chipper's chances of winning a batting title. To have him come as close as he did and lose by three points… there ought to be some sort of equation for Coors Field's impact on that (Rockies' Matt Holliday winning)!

We were proud of the great and consistent starting pitching leadership shown by John Smoltz and Tim Hudson in the face of a thin staff. We didn't have the depth of starting pitching we thought we'd have. But the leadership of Smoltz and Hudson, start after start, was not only important for us but gives us hope about the construction of our starting pitching staff.

Jeff Francoeur continues to mature and develop as a key leadership type player in our club. Brian McCann was a back-to-back All-Star. Then there was the emergence of Yunel Escobar - what a dynamic and exciting young player he is.

And the acquisition of Mark Teixeira... I don't think there's ever been a player of that caliber traded at a mid-season trading deadline. We all found out what Mark Teixeira really is. He's not just a remarkably productive, consistent, reliable player, but he's a player of character, professionalism, work ethic, determination, spirit and all the things you want your cornerstone players to exhibit. We're delighted to have him in our uniform going into next season.

> "WE HAVE TO USE OUR ASSETS IN THE BEST WAY TO PUT THE BEST 25 PEOPLE ON THE FIELD."

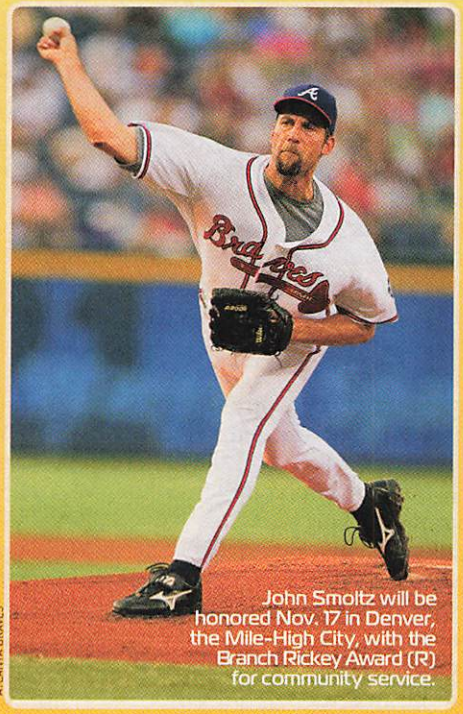
Our bullpen developed remarkably. By season's end, it was regarded as one of the best. And it looks good for next year.

With regard to our plans for 2008, with the solid nucleus of guys I mentioned and some others I didn't mention, and these emerging young players who keep getting better and better, we really feel good. Starting pitching improvement is something we need to work on, and we intend to.

Jo-Jo Reyes, in his last couple of starts, showed what we have seen in the minor leagues and what we expect him to be. Bobby's comments have been glowing about what he sees in Reyes. Jeff Bennett was a real great story. That will clearly be our key focus this off-season - what can we do to make our starting pitching stronger and deeper.

We've got those exciting players I mentioned before, and we have Bobby Cox returning. An element of our team that is not returning is Andruw Jones. I met with Andruw and explained that as a result of the communication we received from his representatives last winter outlining their salary expectations - the length of contract and the amount of dollars per year - it became very clear we would not be able to have Andruw back. We talked about it throughout the year from Dec. 11 (2006) when I received the e-mail until the last day of the season, and even after it. This is a result of their expectations and our acquisition of Teixeira and the commitment we were making to him next year and the things we need to do, focusing on one thing only - putting the best team together.

That's not said in a cavalier, light-hearted, unaffected way. All the information we had to process and analyze, we have talked about for the better part of a year, and we came to the determination that Andruw won't fit on our team next year. We have to use our assets in the best way to put the best 25 people on the field.



John Smoltz will be honored Nov. 17 in Denver, the Mile-High City, with the Branch Rickey Award (R) for community service.

MILE-HIGH SMOLTZ

BRAVES FANS IN THE DENVER AREA will have the opportunity to see **John Smoltz** Nov. 17 when he is scheduled to accept the 2007 **Branch Rickey** Award for community service from the Rotary Club of Denver. The organization has presented the award since 1991 to baseball individuals who contribute unselfishly to their community and are strong role models for young people. The award, named after the Hall of Fame executive who signed **Jackie Robinson** and brought him to the majors with the Dodgers, is voted on by a national selection committee of sports media, past award winners, baseball executives and Rotary district governors.

The event will be held at the Marriott City Center Hotel in downtown Denver and is open to the public. Individual seats are $200 for adults and $75 for youths 18 and under. The evening begins with a silent auction at 5 p.m. (local time). Dinner is at 7:15, and the award presentation at 8. **Bobby Bennett**, an American Idol finalist in 2006, is scheduled to perform.

Visit branchrickeyaward.org for more information, including a reservation form, or call (303) 893-1919. Winners become members of the organization's Baseball Humanitarians Hall of Fame. Former Brave **Brett Butler** (1981-83) won in 1996. **Tom Lasorda** was last year's winner.

PUBLIC APPROVAL!

For the third straight year, the Braves showed an increase in attendance at Turner Field. The final count for the season was 2,745,207 fans, a seven percent increase over 2006 (2,550,524). Even more significantly, it was the highest season attendance since 2001 when the club attracted 2,823,494 fans. The Braves had a 44-37 record at Turner Field in 2007.

The Braves thanked fans for their support during Fan Appreciation Weekend, Sept. 21-23. Throughout the games, fans received many prizes including airline tickets, gift cards, golf outings, and Braves merchandise and memorabilia.

SHOW YOUR SPIRIT

Fans will soon be able to show their team spirit and support the Atlanta Braves Foundation with a state-issued Atlanta Braves license plate. Individuals can apply for the Braves license plate now at their county tag office, online at braves.com/tags, or by calling (404) 362-6500.

For new and renewal license plates, there is an annual charge of $25 for the specialty plates in addition to the regular vehicle registration fee. The Atlanta Braves Foundation will receive $10 for each tag sold.

SKIP REBOUNDS

ChopTalk columnist and Braves broadcaster **Skip Caray**, 68, received a scare in early September when he was hospitalized for eight days due to complications from congestive heart failure. However, he recovered to return to the booth Sept. 17. He began having physical problems during the Braves' road trip at the end of August and eventually checked himself into the hospital shortly after the team returned to Atlanta.

FANFEST TICKETS

Tickets for Braves FanFest, scheduled Jan. 12-13 at the World Congress Center, are available at Braves.com/FanFest, the Turner Field box office, by calling 1-800-326-400, and at TicketMaster locations. Two-day passes purchased in advance are $18 for adults and $12 for children 12 and under. The walkup price is $20 and $15. One-day passes are $12 and $8 in advance and $15 and $10 at the gate. There will be no other charge for any activities - including autographs. Hours are 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Saturday and 10 a.m.-5 p.m. on Sunday.

THE LONG BALL

On Opening Day, the United States Air Force received a specially designed baseball from the Braves that would travel in Air Force jets all around the world. After stops on every continent, the ball returned to Turner Field on Sept. 18 when members of Wings of Blue, the Air Force Academy's jump team, dropped to the field. The ball was then presented by Major Generals **Scott Hammond** and **Thomas Owen** and Brigadier General **Richard Severson** to **Bobby Cox**. The Air Force celebrated its 60th anniversary and the returning ball led off several events hosted by the Air Force Reserve Command and 94th Airlift Wing, leading to Air Force Week in Atlanta from Oct. 8-14.

FABULOUS FOUNDATION

The Atlanta Braves Foundation awarded grants totaling $98,250 to the following non-profit organizations prior to the Sept. 21 game: A Friend's House, Arthritis Foundation - Georgia Chapter, Atlanta Ronald McDonald House Charities, Atlanta Track Club, Brain Tumor Foundation for Children, Canine Assistants, Carrie Steele-Pitts Home, Childkind, Children's Healthcare of Atlanta Foundation, CURE Childhood Cancer, East Lake Foundation, Georgia Avenue Community Ministry, Georgia Campaign for Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention, Nicholas House, North Metro Miracle League, Special Olympics Georgia, StandUP for Kids, The Study Hall at Emmaus House, and Tomorrow's Champions.

The foundation grants funds to youth-serving organizations that focus on health, education, and recreation; that have sound financial practices; and whose plans for the requested funds will have a significant impact upon the individuals served by the requesting organization.

THE SPAHNIE

Cleveland Indians ace **C.C. Sabathia** is the winner of the 2007 Warren Spahn Award given annually to the top lefthander in the majors and named after the winningest lefthander of all-time. The award will be presented at the **Warren Spahn** Gala, tentatively scheduled Jan. 24. The Oklahoma Sports Museum, located in Guthrie, Okla., also plans to honor former Brave **Tom Glavine** (1987-2002) for becoming the latest lefthander to reach the coveted 300-victory club that Spahn heads with 363 wins.

The winner of the Spahn Award is determined by a points system for each lefthander's rank in wins, ERA and strikeouts for the season. Sabathia finished first in wins (19), second in ERA (3.21) and fourth in strikeouts (209) for seven points. Minnesota's **Johan Santana**, a two-time Spahn winner (2004, '06), was runnerup with eight points, and Philadelphia's **Cole Hamels** was third with 13 points. For more information about the event, visit oklahomasportsmuseum.org or call (405) 260-1342. Other past winners include **Randy Johnson** (1999-2002), **Andy Pettitte** (2003) and **Dontrelle Willis** (2005).

BOBBY COX

MANAGER

WE FEEL GOOD ABOUT NUCLEUS OF OUR TEAM

WE DIDN'T MAKE THE PLAYOFFS FOR THE SECOND YEAR in a row, and that's disappointing. We felt when we got to spring training we'd be okay. We were counting on Mike Hampton and a couple of other pitchers who didn't make it out of camp.

That hurt a little, but other clubs have the same problems. In our case, we couldn't overcome them. But I do think we saw some improvements on our club.

The pitching came on strong at the end, starting-wise, and I like the bullpen a lot. It's good the way it is right now. Manny Acosta is pretty impressive. You don't have to play the lefty/righty game with him. He's got weapons to get them both out.

The young "kids" - Jo-Jo Reyes and Jeff Bennett - did exceptionally well, and it looks like good things for the 2008 season.

We've liked Reyes from Day 1, but it's a matter of learning how to pitch in certain situations - bases open and certain counts. He's very, very capable of being that guy. He's a true pitcher. He has a good curveball, changeup, sinker and a four-seamer. He reminds me a lot of Tom Glavine when he first came up.

We really think Reyes is very impressive. He's so close to being a number-two starter at the big league level, though he still needs a little bit of work. We can handle that here, though.

We'll have Mark Teixeira next year for the whole season, and I think that's big. We'll do everything we can do to try to re-sign him (free agent after '08). He's a good hitter, a great defensive player, and a great guy. He's the type of ballplayer who's really organized and knows how to play the game. You want to keep guys like that, although that's not always possible.

> "WE REALLY THINK (JO-JO) REYES IS VERY IMPRESSIVE. HE'S SO CLOSE TO BEING A NUMBER-TWO STARTER."

Regarding Andruw, you couldn't have asked for a better kid, at 19 years old, to come up and join the team. He had 10 years here with just about nothing but winning. He's a big team guy, and we hate to lose him.

And Chipper had a great year, an MVP year. If we had gone on and made the playoffs, he would definitely have been talked about for MVP.

We had some guys who had great years, and we're proud of them. They played hard, and we couldn't ask for much more. We just got behind, lost a few games, and we couldn't catch up.

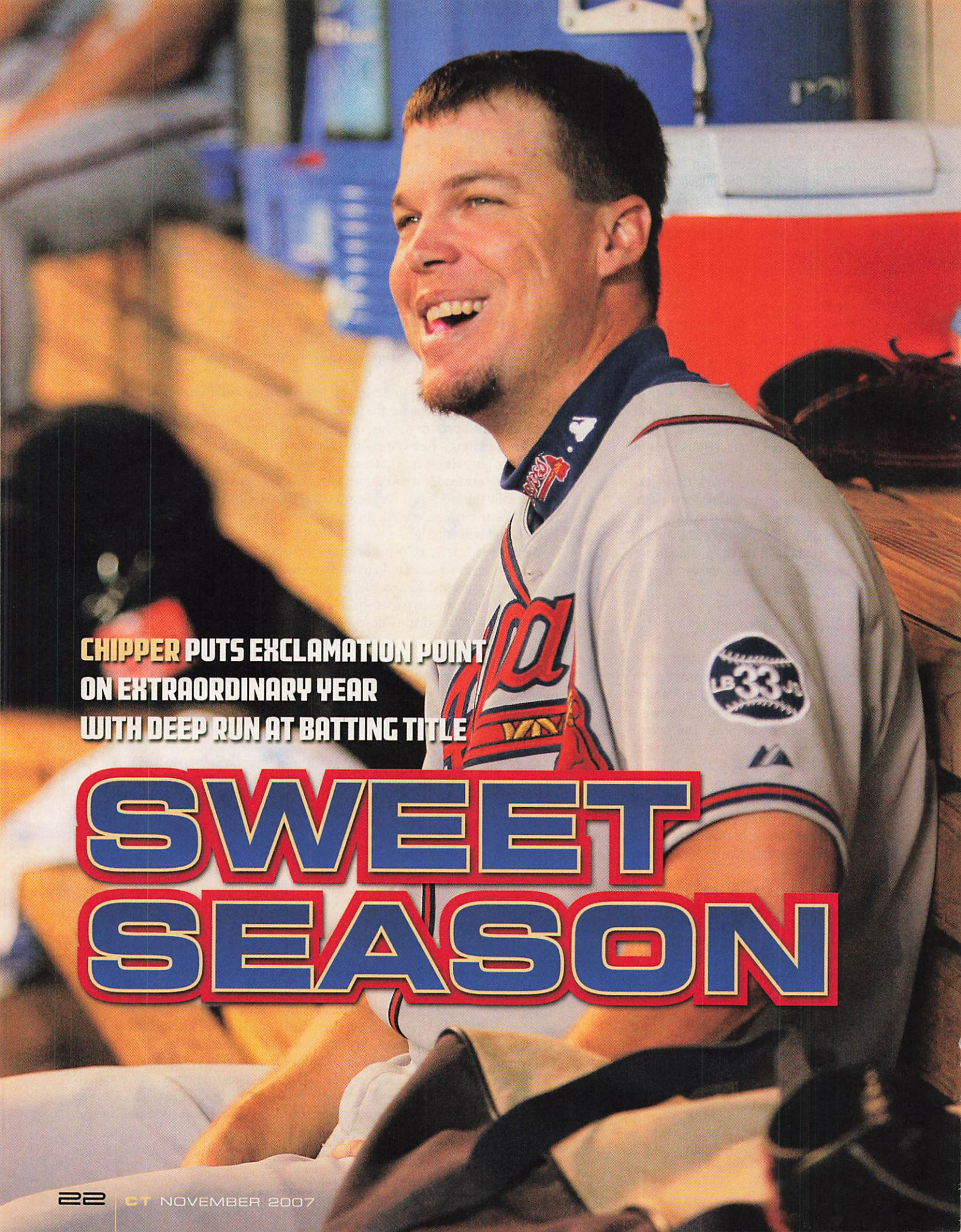
I think it will probably be a pretty active off-season. It would be nice to find a starting pitcher that's solid, but that's why we're glad that Reyes came through. It's nice to have depth. We had no depth because of injuries.

You can never get enough pitching. When you think you have enough, go out and get more. That's always been my philosophy.

Roger McDowell did a super job with the pitchers, and Terry Pendleton with the hitters. By the season's end, we had a good combination working. It was just too late. We'll be looking to improve, but we feel very good with the nucleus of players we're taking forward.

We saw some pretty exciting and amazing baseball the last couple of weeks, especially within the division. I've always said that, as a manager, you never have a big enough lead. If you have a 10-game lead with 11 games to go, you still don't feel comfortable. You never expect to blow a lead, but it's very possible.

I told our players in the last few weeks of the season that it was just a matter of us winning five in a row, them losing five in a row, and we're back in it. We played well enough, winning eight games out of nine toward the end of the season, but the Phillies played a bit better.



CHIPPER PUTS EXCLAMATION POINT ON EXTRAORDINARY YEAR WITH DEEP RUN AT BATTING TITLE

SWEET SEASON

BY JON COOPER

Though the Braves didn't reinstate themselves atop the National League East in 2007, Chipper Jones certainly reestablished himself among the game's elite third basemen. In the process, he gave Braves fans something to hang their emotions on, right down to the final at-bat of the season, even after the team was eliminated from playoff contention.

Only when Chipper lined out to center in the eighth inning Sept. 30 at Houston and Colorado's Matt Holliday got an infield single in the eighth inning against Arizona could the Rockies' leftfielder claim the batting title (technically, he could have lost it the next day by going 0-for-5 in the tiebreaker game against San Diego for the Wild Card).

In spite of being the runnerup for the batting crown, Chipper hit a career-high .337, reached 100 RBIs (102) for the first time since 2003, and became the Atlanta leader in career home runs (386) in a season full of landmark achievements.

"All these milestones are special because they put you in some pretty elite company," Chipper said. "When I got drafted in this organization (No. 1 overall in 1990), I wanted to be mentioned in the same breath with the Hank Aarons and Dale Murphys. In a broader spectrum, I wanted to be mentioned in the same breath with the Mantles and Murrays. To be reaping the benefit of 20 to 25 years of hard work to get to this point is a lot of satisfaction."

The season saw milestones galore for Jones, who was nominated for the NL Hank Aaron Award, given to the top overall hitter in each league. He collected his 2,000th career hit on June 17, joining Aaron and Eddie Mathews as the only players in franchise history to reach that mark.

On July 5, he recorded his 36th career multi-homer game, and in the process hit his 372nd homer, passing Murphy for the Atlanta lead. The next day in San Diego, he got his 400th double, joining Eddie Murray and Chili Davis as the only switch-hitters with 2,000 hits, 400 doubles and 350 homers. He's already only the third switch-hitter to have 300 homers and a .300 average and has the second-highest career batting average for a switch-hitter (.307), behind only Hall-of-Famer Frankie Frisch (.316 from 1919-37) who finished his career 70 years ago.

"I never realized how naturally gifted he was," said Teixeira, a teammate in last year's World Baseball Classic, and whose presence in the lineup as protection helped fuel Jones' run toward the batting title. "This guy can hit any kind of pitcher, whether right-handed or left-handed, no matter what the situation."

There weren't many situations where Jones wasn't superb in 2007. He batted .394 when leading off an inning, .394 when batting with no outs, .331 with one out and .306 with two outs. With runners in scoring position, he hit .310.

"I think I'm overall a better hitter," said Jones, who was fourth in the NL in slugging percentage (.604) and fourth in on-base percentage (.425). "I'm conscious about being a tough out when I go up there. I'm more concerned with the average.

"With the on-base percentage of the guys hitting in front of me, I'm going to get a lot of opportunities. I've got a good hitter hitting behind me (Teixeira) to provide protection, so that means I'm going to get pitches to hit along the way. When I do get those opportunities, I want to come through.

"The fact that I ended up only playing in about 130 games (134) and still being able to put up numbers close to 30 homers, 100 RBIs and scoring 100 runs, is as much a testament to the guys around me as it is to my performance this year."

Chipper's done plenty to help himself by putting the ball in play and using the entire field. He's never had a 100-strikeout season and struck out just 75 times this year, while drawing 82 walks. He was one of only three players in the National League to have at least 25 homers and have more walks than strikeouts. Barry Bonds and Albert Pujols were the others.

Still, there were difficulties along the way. There was a "here we go, again" situation on May 11 at Pittsburgh, when Chipper was running between second and third, vaulted over Pirates third baseman Jose Bautista, and landed awkwardly on his hands.

With both thumbs sprained, he sat out four games, returned to go 8-for-28 (.286) in the next seven games, then was forced by the pain to sit out seven more. Finally, on June 1, he went on the disabled list and missed 19 more games.

Chipper, 35, understood those who looked cynically at the freak nature of the injury, but his frustration was more with how the Braves faltered while he was out, going 8-11 in that stretch, preventing them from possibly re-taking first place.

"When you go out there and play hard and are playing to win, sometimes things happen," said Jones, who also missed games with a strained right adductor and a three-game set in September in New York with a strained right oblique.

FINAL NL RANK - 2007

2ND	AVERAGE	.337
4TH	SLUGGING PCT.	.604
4TH	ON-BASE PCT.	.425
8TH	RUNS	108
11TH	WALKS	82
12TH	DOUBLES	42
15TH	RBIs	102
19TH	HOME RUNS	29

AARON M. SPREDEMAN

Chipper hit the ball hard twice but went 0-for-3 with a walk at Houston on the final day of the season, losing the batting title to Matt Holliday by three points.

ELITE SWITCH-HITTERS

MOST HOME RUNS

1	MICKEY MANTLE	536
2	EDDIE MURRAY	504
3	CHIPPER JONES	386

HIGHEST CAREER AVERAGE

1	FRANKIE FRISCH	.316
2	CHIPPER JONES	.307

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

RECORD BOOK

MODERN BRAVES
(SINCE 1900)

CAREER BATTING AVG.

1	RALPH GARR	.317
2	RICO CARTY	.317
3	LANCE RICHBOURG	.311
4	HANK AARON	.310
5	CHIPPER JONES	.307

HITS

1	HANK AARON	3,600
2	EDDIE MATHEWS	2,201
3	CHIPPER JONES	2,117

HOME RUNS

1	HANK AARON	733
2	EDDIE MATHEWS	493
3	CHIPPER JONES	386

RBIs

1	HANK AARON	2,202
2	EDDIE MATHEWS	1,388
3	CHIPPER JONES	1,299

ATLANTA

CAREER BATTING AVG.

1	RALPH GARR	.317
2	CHIPPER JONES	.307

HITS

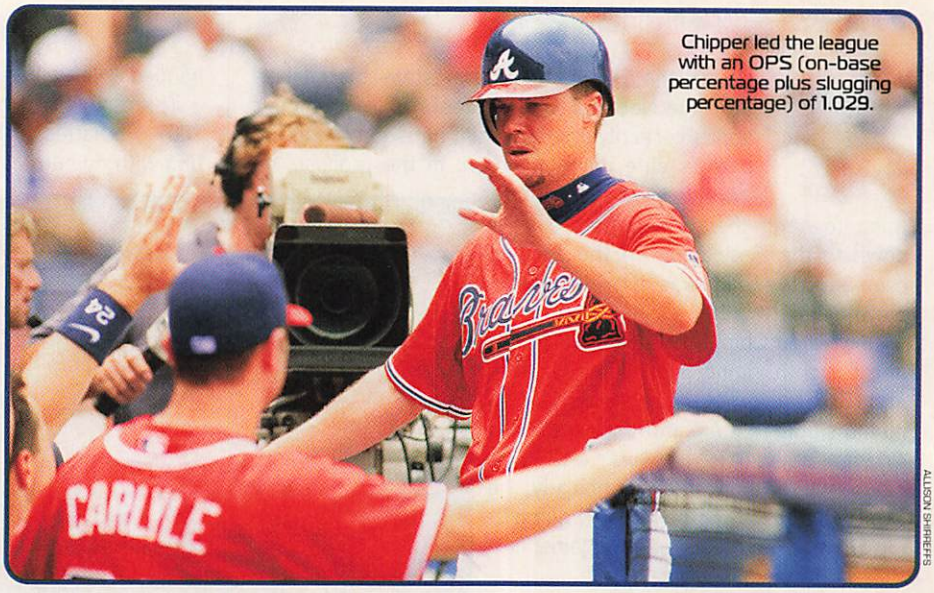
1	CHIPPER JONES	2,117
2	DALE MURPHY	1,901

HOME RUNS

1	CHIPPER JONES	386
2	DALE MURPHY	371

RBIs

1	CHIPPER JONES	1,299
2	DALE MURPHY	1,143



Chipper led the league with an OPS (on-base percentage plus slugging percentage) of 1.029.

ALYSON SHERESH

"It cost me the better part of a month. It's unfortunate, because I really feel like I could have helped us win some games over that period."

Chipper, who was hitting only .300 when he went on the DL, bounced back, getting three hits against Minnesota in his first game back, and he didn't stop hitting, putting himself in position to contend for the batting title, something he's never won (finished fifth in 2001 and 2002).

"He's a good enough hitter that he can win a batting title and a home run title in different years, just depending on what kind of season he's having," said Teixeira.

"Chipper has so much talent that I believe that he [could have] won two, three, four, five batting titles," said Julio Franco, who won the American League batting title with Texas in 1991, the same year as Pendleton, the last Brave to win one.

"The only thing is, his foot was hurt, his ribs. You need a little bit of luck. Nobody wants to get hurt. He plays so hard... you get hurt sometimes. But he's got a lot of ability. The guy can hit. He's so good at the plate that sometimes they don't pitch to him. He's a competitor. He wants to hit, and he'll swing at bad pitches and get himself out. But if he's patient enough at the plate and he waits for his pitch, it's tough to get him out."

While it wasn't a perfect season for Chipper - he missed 28 games - it certainly answered some questions about whether or not he still has the ability to perform at a high level. But he realizes that's still not enough for everyone.

"There's nothing you can do for certain people," said Jones, who came in below the 140-games played mark for the fourth straight year but played in more games than he had since 2004 (137). "They're going to criticize you, they're going to put 'injury-prone' in front of your name regardless of the numbers that you put up.

"I know, a lot of other people know and, more important, the people in this organization know that when I'm healthy and I'm out there competing, I'm still going to put up the numbers that everybody expects me to," he continued. "You prorate my numbers of 162 games or 160 games this year, you're talking about being in the running for not just a batting title but an MVP, as well."

Prorated stats or not, Jones had an MVP kind of year. He was the National League batting leader until the next-to-last game of the season. He scored 108 runs (breaking the century mark for the first time since 2003), drove in 100 runs (102) for the first time since 2003, and fell just one home run shy of hitting 30.

Only 15 times in history has a switch-hitter posted seasons of a .300 average, 30 homers, 100 runs and 100 RBIs. With one more home run, this would have been the sixth time for Chipper. Mickey Mantle, Eddie Murray and Lance Berkman are the only players to do it twice.

"He can still hit - there's no doubt about that," said Terry Pendleton. "He can still play this game. He's had some injuries this year, but he's definitely put up better numbers this year than he did last year just by doing some things the other way offensively and keeping himself ready to go."

Jones, who is signed for 2008 with an option for 2009 that will put him in range of playing his entire career as a Brave, was ready from Opening Day. He hit at least .300 in every month but May, when he hit .283.

"If you want to be a consistent .300 hitter, you can't have months where you hit .220," said Jones. "You're going to go through periods where you run into some good pitching and your swing is not really where it should be and you make outs, but the fact of the matter is that when I have been going good and I've been riding a good streak, it's lasted for more than four or five games. It's lasted the better part of a month."

Actually, it seemed like the better part of the entire season!

GOLD OR SILVER?

Chipper Jones' remarkable all-around season puts him in the running for many post-season honors, including the Rawlings Gold Glove Award and the Hillerich & Bradsby Silver Slugger Award.

Nearly lost among all the talk of Chipper contending for a batting title was his superb fielding at third base. Entering the season, he had a career fielding percentage of .954, but this year, he picked 'em at a .971 clip and committed only nine errors in 310 chances, the fewest among National League third basemen. Chipper had only two more errors than Tampa Bay's Akinori Iwamura, whose seven were the lowest among major league starting third basemen (Iwamura, however, also had 27 fewer chances than Jones).

"Defensively I don't know if he's ever been better," said John Smoltz. "He makes the bare-handed play look routine, and he's probably had a Gold Glove year. He's in a category by himself when it comes to the total position that he plays."

ATLANTA BRAVES

The last Braves third baseman to win a Gold Glove was Terry Pendleton in 1992. The only other Braves third baseman to win it was Clete Boyer in 1969. Managers and coaches vote for the winner.

Statistically, Chipper's top competition would appear to be the Cubs' Aramis Ramirez (.972 with 10 errors) and San Francisco's Pedro Feliz (.973 and 11).

Chipper also could reclaim the Silver Slugger Award at third base, which he won in 1999 and 2000, the only time a Braves third baseman has won it. Managers and coaches also vote on this award for the best hitter at each position.

Statistically, Chipper (.337/29/102) stacks up very well with other top contenders David Wright of the Mets (.325/30/107), Florida's Miguel Cabrera (.320/34/119) and Ramirez of the Cubs (.310/26/101).

THE KEY TO MY SUCCESS IS MENTAL TOUGHNESS

IT WAS AMAZING to be in the chase for the batting title (finished fourth at .332) even after being on the disabled list for so long (Aug. 3-Sept. 7, missing 31 games with a high ankle sprain). I never expected that.

I work really hard. I work hard on my balance, because if I have my balance, I know I can do something. That's why I work hard in the cage.

When I was injured (Aug. 2 when his ankle collapsed while he was fielding a groundball at Turner Field), it was frustrating because I can't get in the cage. I can't do anything but watch the game on the field. As soon as I got off the disabled list, I was back in the cage, every day. Even now, at the end of the season, my ankle is not 100 percent. But I tried to play the best I can.

Being successful in baseball is all work, work and work. It never stops. But the most important thing is your mental attitude. I always say the game is 80 percent mental. If you are strong mentally, no one can beat you. That's what I think.

I always feel like I'm the best, always, no matter if I've gone 0-for-4 or 4-for-4. I know that if I don't get it one day, I'll do it the next. That's the key for me.

When we were little, my mother always worked hard for me and my brothers. That's why we always work hard to get better, to be successful in life.

It's a good feeling for me, after everything that has happened in my career, going to Boston (in 2005) and not having a good season, then coming here and doing well. Sometimes in your career, people will look at one year and think you're done in the game. What you do in the field lets those people know that they are wrong. They can't tell you you're done. You show them that you're not done.

> "IF I END UP GOING SOMEWHERE ELSE NEXT SEASON, I FEEL IT WAS A PRIVILEGE TO PLAY HERE."

I was disappointed that I didn't make the All-Star team this season, because the numbers talk. I felt I should have been there. In baseball, the plays we make, the hits we get become numbers, and if the numbers are there, we should be (on the All-Star team).

But I don't have control over that. That's why I don't get mad. It makes me want to keep trying hard. I'm the kind of person that, if they don't give me something on the field, it keeps me hungry. But I don't really have anything to prove, because the numbers don't lie.

Being in the race for the batting title with Chipper Jones was nice and not so nice! It's nice because he's my teammate, but it's not nice because you want the other guy to get out. But I still play my game. The one thing I wanted was for the batting title to be in Atlanta - either Chipper or me, it didn't matter.

This off-season I'll take a month off, October. Then in November, I'll start working again. I'll lift weights to get strong. I'll run for stamina, and that's tough. I don't like to run! Then I'll start hitting. I spend most of my time with my family during the off-season.

I've enjoyed playing in Atlanta. I like all my teammates and the coaches. I hope to come back to play here (under contract through 2008), but I know that baseball is a business, and sometimes changes have to be made. I don't always have control over the business decisions that are made. Atlanta is close to my home in Miami. I have friends here, but if I end up going somewhere else next season, I feel it was a privilege to play here.

The KING of K's

HOW JOHN SMOLTZ PASSED PHIL NIEKRO TO CAPTURE THE FRANCHISE CAREER STRIKEOUT RECORD

ALLISON SHIRREFFS

BY JAY BUSBEE

NO MATTER how many times you see it, it never gets old.

John Smoltz peers over the edge of his glove, rears back, and deals the third strike. The home crowd goes nuts. Repeat, repeat, repeat... more times than anybody else who ever wore a Braves uniform... more times than anybody else in the post-season.

In August, Smoltz passed Phil Niekro for the top spot on the all-time Braves strikeout list. Finishing 2007 with 2,975 strikeouts, Smoltz has firmly established himself as one of the premier strikeout pitchers of his generation.

Check the stats: Over the 15 full years Smoltz has started, he's ranked in the National League's top 10 in strikeouts 10 times. He led the league twice, in 1992 (215 strikeouts) and 1996 (276). This past season, at age 40, he ranked third in the NL in strikeouts with 197, and first in the league in strikeout-to-walk ratio (4.19).

"John's a power pitcher, but he's a smart power pitcher, which is a rare thing," Niekro said. "He learned what he could do best and went with that, and it's made him one of the best pitchers in the game."

No one knew it at the time, but Smoltz's debut back in July 1988 would prove the perfect opening note to his remarkable career. In his first start against the Mets, Smoltz entered the majors with a less-than-auspicious beginning - he hit the very first batter he faced, Lenny Dykstra. But in that game, which he would win, he recorded his first strikeout against All-Star Darryl Strawberry, who would finish that season second in MVP balloting.

"I don't remember a whole lot of that day," Smoltz said. "I was pretty nervous. I know I didn't handle it as well as some of the guys do now. But I do remember striking out Strawberry. That's the sort of thing that stays with you."

As it turns out, the Strawberry strikeout is notable for more than just being Smoltz's first. It's one of the few that he can recall immediately. He's much less nostalgic than fans and writers. He recalls specific strikeouts when they're mentioned to him, but he focuses far more on the ultimate outcomes of games than on his own achievements. And he'll pick apart each batter based on exploiting their weaknesses, not padding his own stats.

"I don't try to strike out guys," he said. "I'm looking to put them away however I can. Whether that's missing the ball or hitting it a little less hard, that's what I'm really trying to do."

Which is not to say strikeouts are far from his mind.

"Obviously, there are times when I'm looking to strike somebody out - man on third, less than two outs," he said. "But for the most part, I'm pitching to the situation and not being consumed with how I get an out."

That's the right thing to say, but Braves fans are quite familiar with Smoltz's exultant fist-pumps as he closes out an inning with a punch-out.

Certainly the strikeout of Strawberry was a rush. Does he still get the same kind of rush when he rings up a third-inning K in June?

Far from the emotion of the game, he's a little more dispassionate: "There's always satisfaction in out-thinking a guy, making him think you're going one way and then going another. But jumping up and down, I'll save that [for big occasions]."

He's certainly had enough of those. He's the majors' all-time leader in post-season

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

BRAVES STRIKEOUT LEADERS

1	JOHN SMOLTZ	2,975
2	PHIL NIEKRO	2,912
3	WARREN SPAHN	2,493

ATLANTA BRAVES NL STRIKEOUT LEADERS

1996	JOHN SMOLTZ	276
1992	JOHN SMOLTZ	215
1977	PHIL NIEKRO	262

ATLANTA STRIKEOUT LEADERS

1	JOHN SMOLTZ	2,975
2	PHIL NIEKRO	2,855
3	TOM GLAVINE	2,054

ATLANTA SEASON STRIKEOUT LEADERS (1966-2007)

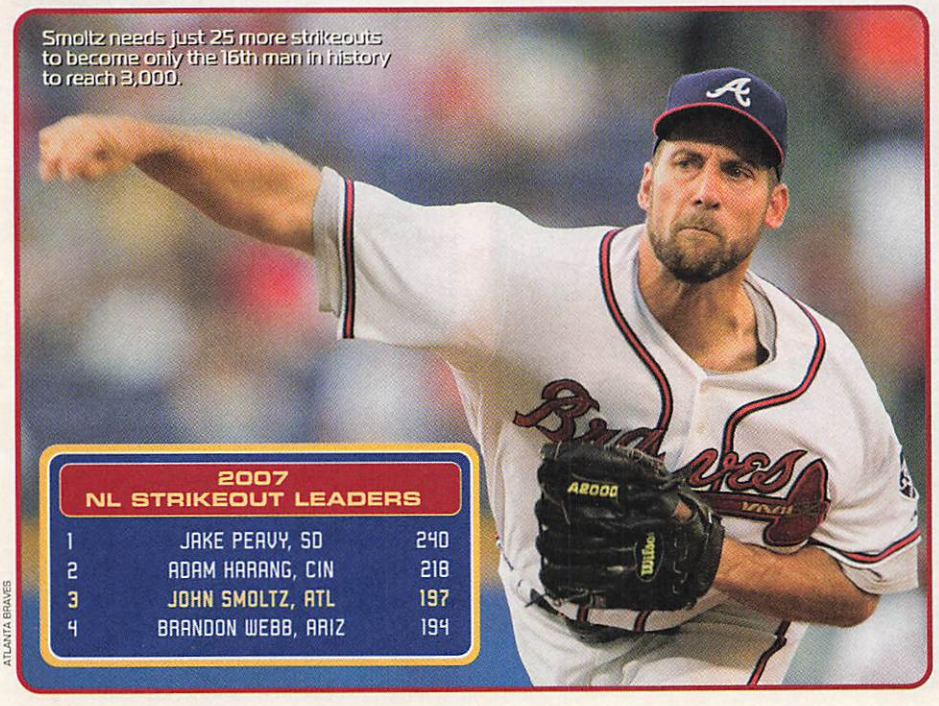
1	JOHN SMOLTZ	276 (1996)
2	PHIL NIEKRO	262 (1977)
3	PHIL NIEKRO	248 (1978)
4	JOHN SMOLTZ	241 (1997)
5	JOHN SMOLTZ	215 (1992)
6	JOHN SMOLTZ	211 (2006)
7	PHIL NIEKRO	208 (1979)
	JOHN SMOLTZ	208 (1993)

BRAVES SEASON STRIKEOUT LEADERS (1876-2007)

1	JOHN SMOLTZ	276 (1996)
2	PHIL NIEKRO	262 (1977)
3	PHIL NIEKRO	248 (1978)
4	JOHN SMOLTZ	241 (1997)
5	VIC WILLIS	225 (1902)
6	JOHN SMOLTZ	215 (1992)

ATLANTA SINGLE GAME STRIKEOUT RECORD

15 - JOHN SMOLTZ (TWICE)
VS. MONTREAL
MAY 24, 1992; VS. METS APRIL 10, 2005



strikeouts with 194 (Roger Clemens ranked second entering the 2007 post-season with 172). He was on the mound for some of the Braves' most memorable moments, including Game 7 of the 1991 World Series, and he's recorded some of the most memorable post-season strikeouts in Braves history in that time (see SpeKKKKtacular!).

"I know only two guys who could turn it up in the playoffs," former Braves pitcher Greg Maddux told ESPN The Magazine last month. "Steve Avery and John Smoltz. Smoltz is the best playoff teammate I've had. I have no idea how he does it."

Nor do most batters. Whether it's April or October, Smoltz has thrown K's no matter when he's entered a game. During his three-year stint as a closer, his propensity for strikeouts served him well. But in that role, as in his starts, Smoltz let the situation, not adrenaline, dictate the pitch.

"A reliever has more opportunities, more situations that call for [a strikeout] than a starter," Smoltz noted. "All in all, I'm basically going to let my stuff determine whether or not [a batter] swings and misses, not stand up there and go, 'I'm going to blow this one by him.'"

He may not try to overpower hitters, but that's certainly a pretty frequent result. And it comes from his mastery of multiple pitches.

"He's got one of the best sliders in the game," said Brian McCann. "Any time a right-handed hitter gets down in the count, [Smoltz has] got a devastating slider that looks like a fastball. And he's got a great splitter that knocks out left-handed batters."

"John can throw whatever he wants, whenever he wants to," said no less an authority than new Hall of Fame inductee Tony Gwynn.

"Early in his career he'd go harder. Now he doesn't have to. He can throw a slider, throw a change, throw a split [-fingered fastball] with a lot less effort and a lot better results."

When he was playing, Gwynn apparently sized up Smoltz fairly effectively, because Smoltz says he never did manage to strike out the Padres great.

Craftiness and conditioning have extended Smoltz's career, and now, within 25 strikeouts of becoming just the 16th man to reach 3,000, he knows exactly what has to be done to pick apart almost any batter.

"He knows what he wants to throw before I put the sign down," McCann said. "If I call something and he doesn't like it, he'll shake me off. And he's usually right. Are you going to argue with a Hall of Famer?"

Whether Smoltz eventually does enter the Hall of Fame is a matter for another day. For now, leave it to another current Cooperstown resident to sum up Smoltz's strikeout skills:

"We always knew he had it in him to break my record," Niekro said. "The Niekro family couldn't be prouder of John. I don't think the Braves family could, either."

When it comes to pitch selection, Brian McCann (L) defers to Smoltz because, "Are you going to argue with a Hall of Famer?"

ATLANTA BRAVES

ALL-TIME STRIKEOUT LEADERS

* Hall of Famer • Not yet eligible for Hall of Fame

1	NOLAN RYAN*	5,714
2	ROGER CLEMENS	4,672
3	RANDY JOHNSON	4,616
4	STEVE CARLTON*	4,136
5	BERT BLYLEVEN	3,701
6	TOM SEAVER*	3,640
7	DON SUTTON*	3,574
8	GAYLORD PERRY*	3,534
9	WALTER JOHNSON*	3,509
10	PHIL NIEKRO*	3,342
11	GREG MADDUX	3,273
12	FERGUSON JENKINS*	3,192
13	BOB GIBSON*	3,117
14	CURT SCHILLING	3,116
15	PEDRO MARTINEZ	3,030
16	JOHN SMOLTZ	2,975
17	JIM BUNNING*	2,855

ALL-TIME POST-SEASON STRIKEOUT LEADERS

1	JOHN SMOLTZ	194
2	Roger Clemens	172
3	Tom Glavine	143

WHIFFFFFFFF! SMOLTZ'S TOP VICTIMS

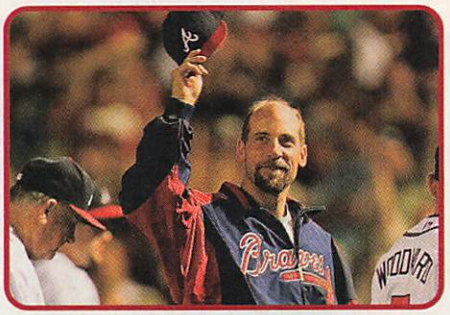
1	Craig Biggio	26
2	Reggie Sanders	22
3	Steve Finley	21
	Benito Santiago	21
5	Andres Galarraga	20
6	Eric Karros	19
7	Mike Lieberthal	18
	Sammy Sosa	18
	Matt Williams	18
	David Wright	18
11	Juan Samuel	17
12	Jay Bell	16
	Mike Piazza	16
	Robby Thompson	16
	Larry Walker	16
16	Derek Bell	15
	Luis Gonzalez	15
18	Barry Bonds	14
	Pat Burrell	14
	Shawon Dunston	14
	Mickey Morandini	14
	Tim Wallach	14
23	Ken Caminiti	13
24	Andujar Cedeno	12
	Royce Clayton	12

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

SpeKKKKtacular!

John Smoltz has thrown some of the most memorable strikeouts in Braves history. Here are a few highlights:

- July 23, 1988 - Smoltz fans the Mets' Darryl Strawberry for his first major league strikeout en route to his first major league win.
- 1991, World Series, Game 7: In the third inning, Smoltz strikes out future Hall of Famer Kirby Puckett with a man on third to kill a potential Twins rally.
- 1992, NLCS, Game 4: Smoltz notches three multi-strikeout innings against the Pirates, including all three outs in the first.



ATLANTA BRAVES

- 1995 World Series, Game 3: Facing the hot-hitting Indians, Smoltz strikes out the side, including Jim Thome and Sandy Alomar, in the bottom of the second.
- 1996 All-Star Game: Starting the All-Star Game, Smoltz strikes out Albert Belle and eventually gets the win for the National League.
- 1996 NLCS, Game 1: After the Cardinals' Brian Jordan leads off the second with a triple, Smoltz proceeds to strike out the side.
- 1996 World Series, Game 5: Smoltz strikes out three Yankees to start the game and six of the first nine.
- 1997 Division Series, Game 3: Smoltz throws 11 strikeouts in seven innings against Houston, striking out the side in the second and four in a row during the fifth and sixth.
- June 7, 1999: Smoltz K's Tampa Bay's John Flaherty for his 2,000th strikeout, and hits a three-run homer for good measure.
- 2002 Division Series, Game 2: Coming out of the bullpen, Smoltz throws three strikeouts in a row to close out the game against San Francisco.
- August 19, 2007: Smoltz blows away the Diamondbacks' Mark Reynolds to pass Phil Niekro on the Braves' all-time strikeout list.

LEO COULD BE LOOKING TO LEAVE THE ORIOLES

ORIOLES (AND FORMER BRAVES) pitching coach **Leo Mazzone**, entering the final year of his three-year, $1.5 million contract, was "looking around" for a potential landing spot after the season ended, according to industry sources. Mazzone's boyhood friend, **Sam Perlozzo**, was fired as Orioles manager on June 18, and owner **Peter Angelos** is said to be disenchanted with Mazzone's failure to improve the team's pitching. The Orioles have ranked next-to-last (13th) in the American League in ERA in each of Mazzone's two seasons. They ranked seventh and 10th in the two seasons prior to his arrival.

The departure of **Walt Jocketty** as Cardinals general manager doesn't necessarily mean that manager **Tony La Russa** will follow him out of St. Louis. If La Russa, 63, is intent on managing next season, the Cardinals represent his best opportunity. Openings with the Reds, Royals, Phillies and Pirates are far less attractive, and the possibility of an opening with the Yankees isn't necessarily appealing to La Russa, who might bristle at the daily crush of media. Even teams that theoretically might fire their managers to hire La Russa - the Brewers, Orioles, Blue Jays, even the Dodgers - might not meet his competitive goals or price. La Russa earned a reported $2.8 million last season.

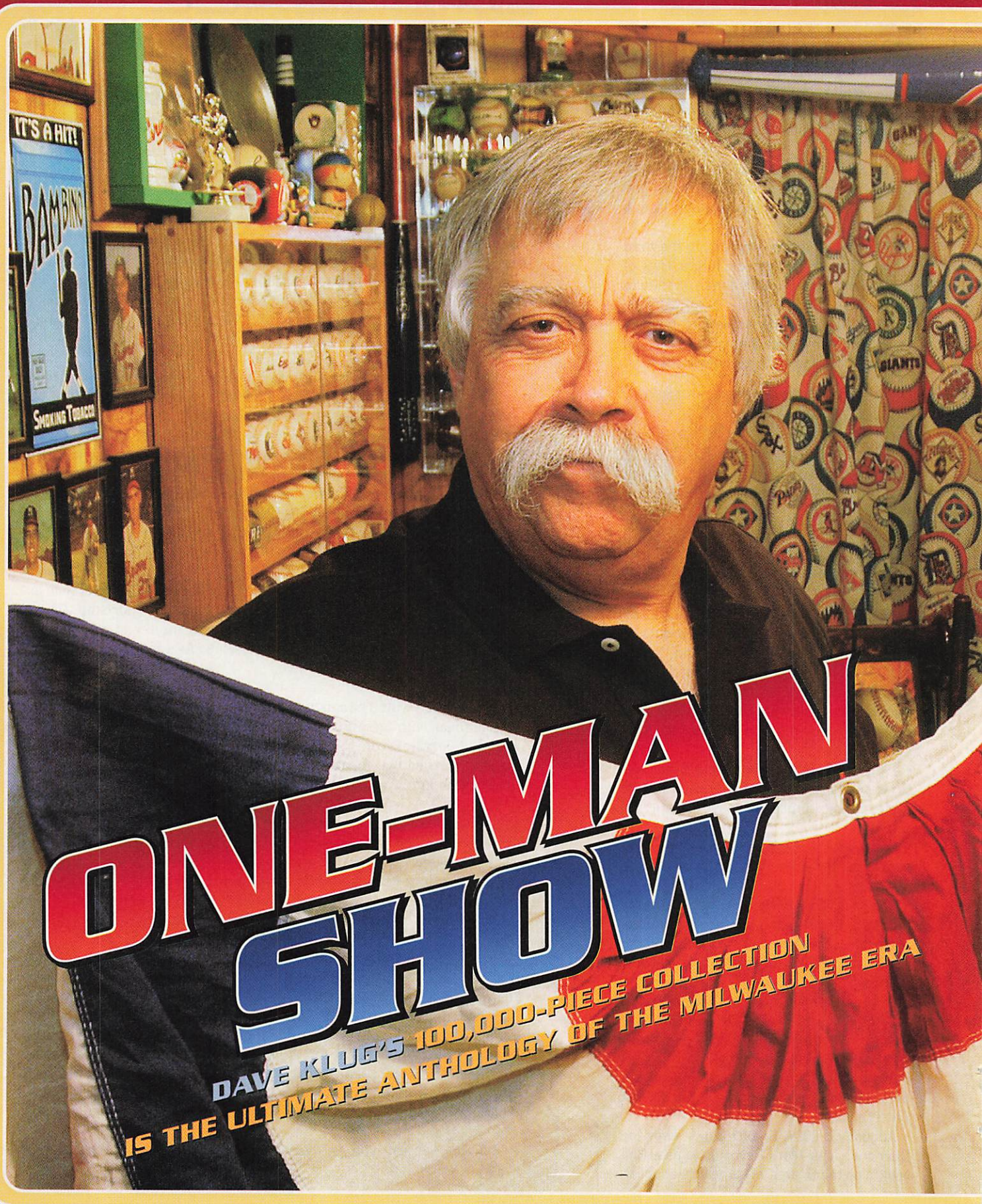
The Mets, in need of more grit, could be attracted to free agents such as Phillies centerfielder **Aaron Rowand** and Cardinals shortstop **David Eckstein**. Rowand, 30, likely will use **Eric Byrnes**' three-year, $30 million contract with the Diamondbacks as his baseline. As a free agent, he seems likely to get a fourth guaranteed year.

The Nationals would be a natural fit for **Andruw Jones**, considering that he is familiar with team president **Stan Kasten** and is close with bench coach **Pat Corrales** from their days together with the Braves. Kasten, however, has signaled that the team is not yet competitive enough to justify a major splash in free agency.

As the post-season began, **Joe Girardi** remained a wild card in the managerial sweepstakes. The departure of **Rick Kranitz** as Marlins pitching coach was widely interpreted as a signal that Girardi could be close to another position. Kranitz also was mentioned as a possibility to replace Mazzone if the Orioles make a change. He worked previously under top Orioles executive **Andy MacPhail** in the Cubs organization.

The Rockies' plan to increase payroll next season could make them a player for an elite starting pitcher in the trade market. Marlins lefthander **Dontrelle Willis**, in whom the Rockies have shown past interest, would be one possibility. Orioles lefty **Erik Bedard** could be another, if the O's are willing to trade him. The Rockies and other clubs might be willing to part with premium young talent for Willis or Bedard, both of whom are two years from free agency. The Twins' **Johan Santana**, a free agent after next season, would be less appealing to a team like the Rockies, who probably could not sign him long-term.

- KEN ROSENTHAL IS A SENIOR WRITER FOR FOXSPORTS.COM



ONE-MAN SHOW

DAVE KLUG'S 100,000-PIECE COLLECTION IS THE ULTIMATE ANTHOLOGY OF THE MILWAUKEE ERA

ADAM MAY

BY BOB BUEGE

IN HIS CLASSIC BIOGRAPHY of Babe Ruth, author Robert Creamer tells the story of a chance meeting on a train between Ruth and reigning heavyweight boxing champion Max Schmeling. Afterwards a friend traveling with The Babe told him he should have asked for the champ's autograph. The great slugger snapped, "Who wants to collect that crap?"

The answer to Ruth's question is: Dave Klug.

Actually, Klug doesn't save prizefighters' signatures. What he does collect is every imaginable item related to the Milwaukee Braves, whose history spanned just 13 years - 1953-65.

Klug, 66, is not a dealer in memorabilia. He is a hobbyist, an amateur in the true Latin meaning of the word (from amat, "he loves").

"A lot of people refer to my house as 'The Black Hole,'" Klug said, "because things go in, but nothing ever comes out. I express to all my friends a willingness to trade, but I can't remember..."

The sentence does not need to be completed.

Of course, just about every sports fan has some remembrance or souvenir. And most baseball lovers, even casual observers, have items ranging from team T-shirts to caps to huge foam hands with an index finger indicating their team is "number one."

Most sports fans who are not Dave Klug, though, have limits. Klug is guided by a simpler philosophy.

"My attitude is: If it says 'Milwaukee Braves' on it, I want it."

That clear vision has filled three and a half rooms in his house in Lincoln, Ill. It might be four rooms, except Klug has to share one room with his son Jesse's 150,000 comic books. As the saying goes, the apple doesn't fall too far from the tree.

"The rooms are jammed," said Klug, who is retired from the music industry and is working on a book about Milwaukee Braves memorabilia. "Cluttered. Stuff on top of stuff. I've got bunting from the 1957 World Series (L). I have no room to hang it."

Autographs?

"I have a signature of every guy who ever played for, coached, or managed the Milwaukee Braves," he explained.

That's 192 men.

"I've had those for a long time," he added. He has a single-signature baseball from 168 of those men, and he's working on the other two dozen. Beyond autographs and photos, he has innumerable items from seemingly every player.

There's Bob Buhl's game-worn jersey. Eddie Mathews' equipment bag. But those are easy.

"Pick someone more obscure," he challenged.

Okay, how about Ray Shearer? Shearer had just two at-bats in the major leagues, getting his only hit as a pinch-hitter in the ninth inning of a meaningless game on the final day of the Braves' 1957 season.

"I have his 1957 contract," Klug immediately replied.

The roots of Klug's impressive collection are pure Norman Rockwell. He grew up "out in the boonies" of central Wisconsin. He was 12 when the Braves arrived in Wisconsin from Boston, and he began listening devotedly to Braves radio broadcasts. Just as some people remember where they were when they heard that President Kennedy was shot or the Challenger blew up, Klug recalls where he was when Joe Adcock hit four home runs and a double at Ebbets Field on July 31, 1954.

Whenever he could get a nickel, Klug walked to the local grocery store and bought ice cream or a pack of baseball cards - and pretty soon he abandoned the ice cream.

"The earliest cards I remember were that '53 Bowman set that had the names on the back," Klug recalled.

He collected cards seriously but not fanatically, then drifted away from them after starting high school. At that point, "I was more interested in playing the game."

When Klug played football at La Crosse State College and state league baseball for the town of Hatley, his mother, like seemingly every mom in America, was busy discarding his old Bowman and Topps treasures.

"It was not a great loss to me then," he insisted.

Later, Klug pursued an interest in music. As he described it, "I had a pretty good career as a rock 'n' roller. We were on A&M, Herb Alpert's label, in the days of the Carpenters." Klug's group, Hope, was a Christian rock band.

"We were way ahead of our time. I think I

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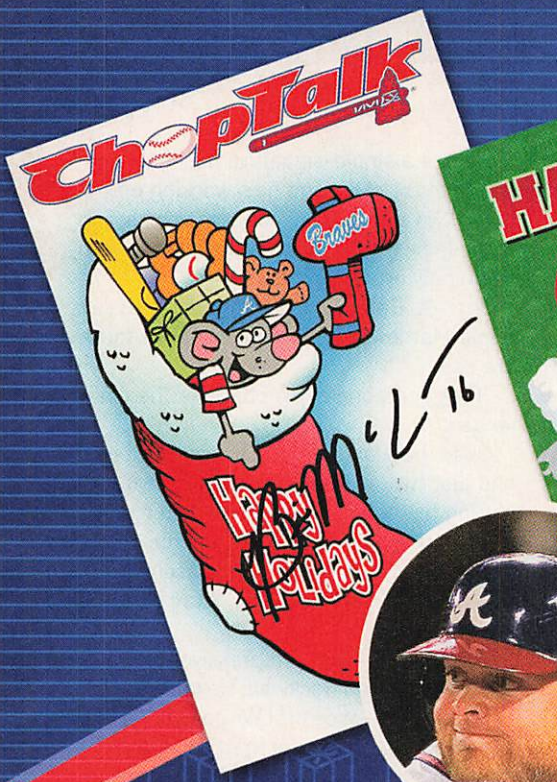

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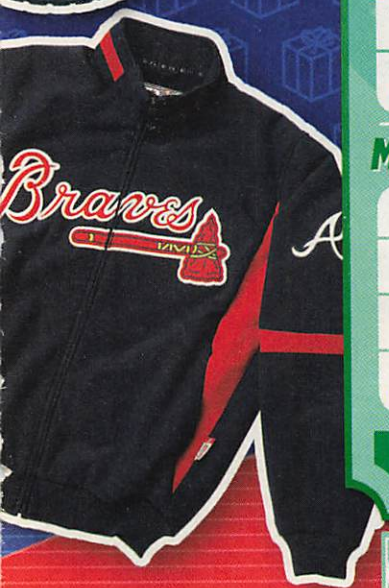

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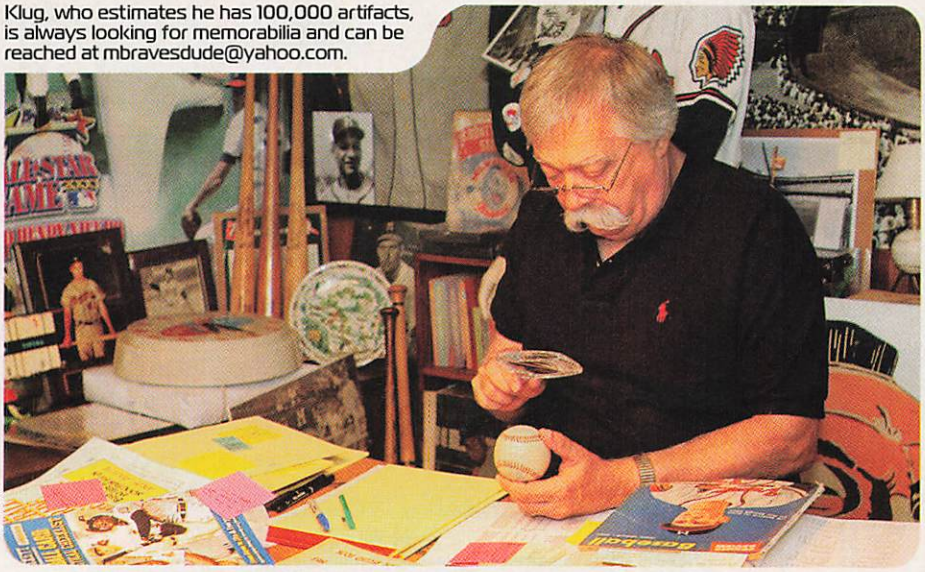


Klug, who estimates he has 100,000 artifacts, is always looking for memorabilia and can be reached at mbravesdude@yahoo.com.

ADAM MAY

Then St. Louis. Then I found out there was a National (Sports Collectors Convention). Then I found out there was eBay..."

A gregarious nature and a willful spirit have taken Klug (and his understanding wife, Gayle) to all parts of the country in pursuit of his hobby. In 2005, they drove for 11 hours through the torrential residual rains of Hurricane Katrina to reach Buffalo, N.Y., to find Sibby Sisti. Klug had Sisti's 1953 home uniform and wanted him to sign it. Sisti, who played his entire 13-year career with the Braves, but only 47 games in Milwaukee, did so.

What Klug values most is not the accumulation of memorabilia, but his experiences in acquiring them. His collection includes, for example, a picture signed by Joe Adcock and personalized "To Steve."

ADAM MAY

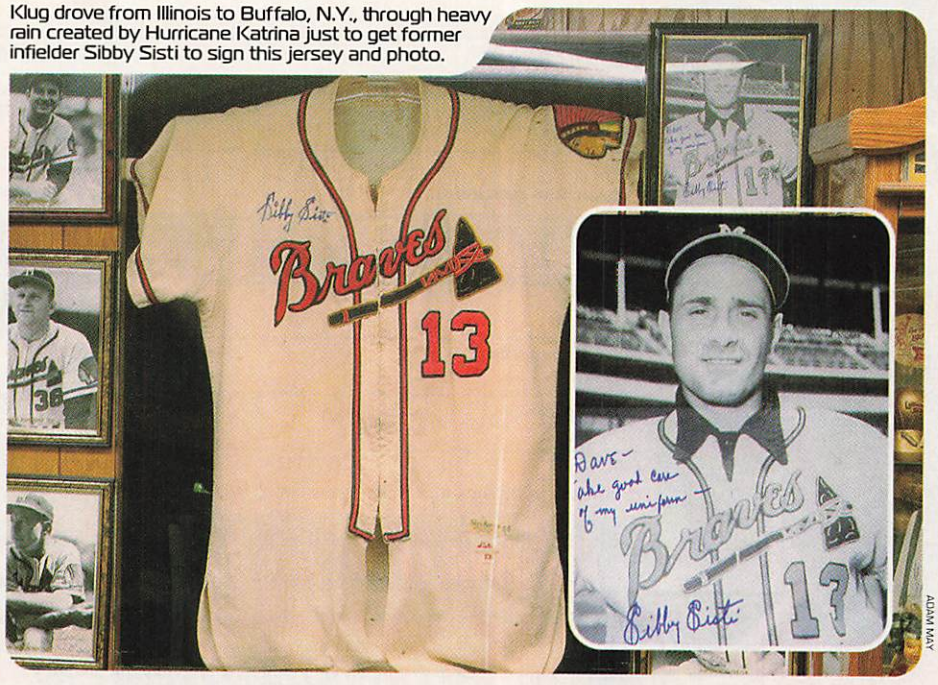
had my 15 minutes of fame when I was playing rock 'n' roll. I played bass in that group, but I think of myself as an old '50s rhythm guitar player."

In the 1980s, Klug's youngest son, Mike, who was seven or eight, wanted to collect something other than comics, like his brother. Klug decided they could "do the father-son thing" and collect baseball cards. They began attending shows together.

The proliferation of expensive card sets and the commercial aspect of the card business soon left a sour taste with Klug. He turned his attention instead to the ballplayers who signed autographs and drew people to the shows.

"These guys were willing to talk to you," he said. "I started off just getting a picture signed and a ball signed."

Klug and his son began visiting small local shows near their central Illinois home, but as he told it, "Then I found out they had shows in Chicago, so I went there.



Klug drove from Illinois to Buffalo, N.Y., through heavy rain created by Hurricane Katrina just to get former infielder Sibby Sisti to sign this jersey and photo.

ADAM MAY

SPECIAL

TOP 10 MOST SURPRISING ITEMS IN KLUG'S COLLECTION

1963 Milwaukee Braves Stock Prospectus and Stock Certificate.

Amplifier and Microphone from County Stadium Broadcast Booth Autographed by Announcer Earl Gillespie.

Original Karl Hubenthal Art from The Sporting News, circa '57 World Series.

Bob Hazle, Nippy Jones, Ray Shearer 1957 Contracts.

Jim Pendleton Game Bat.

Dirt from Pitcher's Mound at County Stadium.

Case of 45s With the Song "Warren Spahn" by The Blackholes.

Single-Signed Danny O'Connell Baseball.

Bat from Eddie Mathews' Batting Range.

Lamp Post Indian Signed by Hank Aaron, Andy Pafko, Bob Buhl (L).

This panoramic photo shows the four walls of just one room in Klug's four-room collection that includes five World Series pennants (R) among thousands of Milwaukee Braves items.

SPECIAL

He obtained it personally at one of Adcock's last autograph sessions, when the slugging first baseman's Alzheimer's was advanced. Klug described the scene:

"I came up to the table and said, 'Mr. Adcock, sir, would you sign this, please?' He said, 'Sure, what's your name?' I said 'Dave.'

"Then I said, 'Would you mind if my son took our picture together?' He said, 'No, not at all.'"

After posing with Klug, arms around each other's shoulders, Adcock asked, "What's your name?" Dave told him again, and Adcock sat down and signed his photograph: "To Steve, best wishes, Joe Adcock."

Klug's son looked at the picture and said, "Dad, you have to get your money back. You have to get him to do that over!"

Klug told his son, "Are you kidding me? I just got a $100,000 story."

The Dave Klug collection remained behind closed doors until this summer. Because this year marks the 50th anniversary of the Milwaukee Braves' 1957 World Series victory over the Yankees, museums in Wisconsin's two largest cities have celebrated with exhibits honoring that ballclub.

The Milwaukee County Historical Society (MCHS) is augmenting its own holdings with 84 items from the Klug collection in commemorating Milwaukee's greatest baseball season. MCHS director Bob Teske said, "Dave very graciously served as a guest curator and loaned us a wide range of materials."

Besides the obvious contributions of autographed balls, pennants and photos of all kinds, Klug also provided a County Stadium turnstile, a tavern back-bar inning-by-inning scoreboard, and an array of "fan art" that includes a concrete baseball glove and a woman's skirt with the Braves' names embroidered on it.

Speaking about the exhibit at the Wisconsin Historical Museum in Madison, curator Dave Driscoll said, "This exhibit literally could not have happened without Dave Klug. The real part of the story wasn't just what happened on the field, but what happened in the stands and beyond. That's really where Dave's collection came in."

Driscoll cites items like a congratulatory telegram from the president of the Schlitz brewery to Braves owner Lou Perini, sent immediately after the World Series. He also refers to newspaper photos that the paper no longer has - but Dave Klug does.

One object Driscoll did not mention also drew a lot of interest - County Stadium's home plate from the '57 World Series, signed by Hank Aaron.

Asked if he has the world's largest Milwaukee Braves collection, Klug said, "It depends on how you mean that. There are guys with more uniforms, more bats, more baseballs, more pictures, more autographs than me. But those guys don't have all those other things.

"In terms of numbers, of diversity, that kind of thing, probably... probably."

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ROCKET FAN

ELTON JOHN SHARES TRADE SECRETS WITH SCHUERHOLZ, NIEKRO AND LEMKE

BY DOUG MILLER OF MLB.COM

CONSISTENCY IS THE MARK of a champion when it comes to baseball and the mark of a legend when it comes to rock 'n' roll music.

Since 1991, the Braves have been the most consistent team in the majors when it comes to winning their division - a record 14 consecutive times from 1991-2005 - and have also won five National League pennants and the 1995 World Series.

Sir Elton John, meanwhile, has been charting No. 1 singles and albums since the early 1970s and still sells out arenas all over the world, even at the age of 60.

The Braves and Elton have a lot more in common than a tradition of excellence over a number of years. They're also huge fans of each other's work.

With that in mind, MLB.com brought representatives of the Braves organization to an Atlanta recording studio for a chat with none other than the Rocket Man himself, who happens to be a part-time Atlanta resident and full-time Braves fanatic.

John Schuerholz, former second baseman Mark Lemke, and Hall of Fame pitcher Phil Niekro visited with Elton, who was wearing a Braves jacket and trademark neon-colored shades. The four of them, baseball and music fans alike, launched into a lengthy and mutually enlightening conversation touching on numerous topics including the similarities between running a baseball team and a rock band, the Braves' and Elton's huge hits through the years, and much more.

Elton, who moved to Atlanta in 1991 - right when Schuerholz was about to enjoy the fruits of an entire franchise turnaround - immediately became enamored with the Braves.

As Elton described it, once he learned the rules of baseball, he could only watch it on TBS, which was the station of the Braves. Those were the days, as Elton describes it, "when Fulton County Stadium had 3,000 people in it."

"In a way, it's very poetic," Elton said about baseball. "I watched it and I fell in love with the game, and I learned how it worked, and I loved it and the Braves became my team.

"I watch baseball whenever I am on the road, whether it's the Braves or whether it's someone else. For me, it's a huge relaxation and, like cricket, one of the most poetic things you can do is watch a game of baseball."

Elton is no stranger to sports or to the Braves. Among other things, he was a major contributor to the Warren Spahn statue, dedicated at Turner Field in 2003, and he has been known to send a bottle of champagne to Bobby Cox on special occasions. He receives ChopTalk monthly, and in the early '90s, he met some of the Braves during batting practice at Wrigley Field. He also loves tennis, has been an owner and an active president of the Watford Football (soccer) Club in his native land of Great Britain, and he knows the ins and outs of trades, free agency, player demands and the necessity of a team concept to achieve victory.

Schuerholz knows all about that, too, having resurrected the Braves from the NL cellar and built a consistent winner from the ground up.

MLB.COM

Elton John displays his loyalty in a recent meeting with (L-R) John Schuerholz, Mark Lemke and Phil Niekro, but he is a long-time Braves fan and a major contributor to the Warren Spahn statue at Turner Field.

"When I heard Elton was moving here in '91 and the Braves offered me the job, I took it," Schuerholz joked. "I've been a big fan of his forever, as all of us have been, and we had a challenge ahead of us in 1991... But (there's been a) consistency of excellence of our product, like Elton's products... the entire experience, what we promise to our fans we've been able to deliver, and we're really proud of that."

As impressed as Schuerholz, Lemke and Niekro must have been to hear Elton, unsolicited, bring up the names of former Brave Sid Bream and current budding star Brian McCann, Elton came away glowing with serious insider info after getting some of his own burning Braves questions answered.

Captain Fantastic wanted to know, for example, why Schuerholz let Gary Sheffield go, and he found out it was a simple case of economics in building a team. He also wanted to know why a young slugger named Jermaine Dye suffered the same fate at the hands of Schuerholz, and the GM could only answer that it was a big mistake.

The always-outspoken Elton John also took advantage of this meeting of baseball minds to express a few strong opinions.

To begin with, Elton declared that in his view, there shouldn't be a designated hitter and the best-of-five format in the Division Series "stinks."

He got a laugh and a hearty agreement from Schuerholz, who quipped, "Can I take you to the next GM's meeting with me? I've been saying that for the last 20 years."

The inspired play of rookie infielder Yunel Escobar, sliding home against the Phillies, was one of the highlights of the season.

SEASON IN REVIEW

FAST START... STRONG FINISH... BUT NOT ENOUGH IN BETWEEN MEANS THIRD PLACE AGAIN

BY GARY CARUSO

PHOTOS: ATLANTA BRAVES

THE BRAVES got off to a fast start, winning seven of their first eight games. Nothing wrong with that.

They also finished strong, winning eight of nine from Sept. 16-25 when they were making a desperate run at the Wild Card. Nothing wrong with that.

In between, however, they were 67-72 (.482). Playing five games under .500 for the bulk of the season doomed them to a second straight year of watching the postseason from home.

Bobby Cox's team finished 84-78, five games better than 2006 (79-83), but the Braves finished third for the second straight season. They were able to slash 13 games off the GB column, however, winding up five games back of the first-place Phillies compared to 18 behind the first-place Mets in 2006.

Statistically, it's difficult to determine how the Braves didn't make the playoffs. They scored 77 more runs than opponents, the second-highest run differential in the league. Only Wild Card winner Colorado (+101) did better.

The Braves also finished third in team ERA (4.11), trailing only San Diego (3.68) and the Cubs (4.04). And Atlanta tied (the Mets and Dodgers) for second in batting average (.275), behind Colorado (.279). The Braves scored 810 runs, third in the NL behind the Phillies (892) and the Rockies (851).

Obviously, numbers don't tell the whole story. For whatever reason, the hitting was "feast or famine" virtually all season, resulting in a poor record in close games, as detailed further in this month's Behind the Numbers on page 41. An example of the "famine" aspect took place June 19-24 when the Braves were shut out four times in five games and scored only one run in 46 innings, that on a Chipper Jones home run.

Perhaps the most-befuddling aspect of the season is how the Braves were able to add Mark Teixeira at the July 31 trading deadline, give up very little off the big league roster to get him, have him drive in 56 runs in 54 games, yet make no significant improvement in record over the final two months. When Teixeira arrived, the Braves were five games over .500 at 56-51. In spite of his remarkable production, the Braves finished the season six games over .500.

Perhaps the lack of making a move with Teixeira at first base was at least partially due to Edgar Renteria missing a month (Aug. 3-Sept. 7) with a high ankle sprain. Yet impressive rookie Yunel Escobar was able to step in and hit well over .300 in Renteria's absence (.326 for the year).

It's easy to blame the pitching, particularly the starting pitching, yet the staff ERA of 4.11 was a half run better than it was in

TEAM LEADERS

BATTERS

Average	.328	Matt Diaz
Home Runs	29	Chipper Jones
RBIs	105	Jeff Francoeur
Hits	188	Jeff Francoeur
Runs	108	Chipper Jones
Doubles	42	Chipper Jones
Triples	10	Kelly Johnson
Walks	82	Chipper Jones
Steals	17	Willie Harris

PITCHERS

Wins	16	Tim Hudson
ERA	1.80	Peter Moylan
Games	80	Peter Moylan
Saves	20	Bob Wickman
Innings	224 1/3	Tim Hudson
Strikeouts	197	John Smoltz

2006 (4.60) and was better than three of the four NL playoff teams. Only the Central-division-winning Cubs were better among the playoff teams, and then only barely (4.04).

And Atlanta pitchers held opponents to a .259 batting average - fourth in the league behind the Cubs (.246), Padres (.250) and Mets (.255). This in spite of Mike Hampton missing the season with a torn flexor tendon that required surgery.

Enough trying to analyze this team's performance. Again, it goes back to a poor record in close games - 18-25 (.419) in one-run games, which made up over 26 percent of their results.

Rafael Soriano held opposing hitters to a .181 batting average.

Nevertheless, it sill was an immensely entertaining season on many fronts. John Smoltz pitched like he was 30 years old instead of 40, and Tim Hudson had his best season - by far - in three as a Brave. Smoltz and Hudson ranked among league leaders in several categories, and gave Cox as good of a 1-2 punch as any in the NL.

One of the most-pleasant developments was the improvement of the bullpen, which John Schuerholz made his top off-season goal a year ago. The relievers' collective 3.54 ERA was second in the league to San Diego, and their .242 batting average allowed was third behind the Padres (.237) and Cubs (.241). That came in spite of key lefty setup man Mike Gonzalez missing most of the season to have elbow surgery and closer Bob Wickman being handed his walking papers Aug. 24.

Much of the improvement can be credited to the unexpected work of Peter Moylan, who started the season at Richmond. His 1.80 ERA and .208 batting average allowed were impeccable. He joined Chris Hammond (0.95 in 2002) as the only Braves relievers with an ERA under 2.00 in at least 70 innings since 1981. And he was just the third reliever in Atlanta history to work at least 80 innings and post a sub-2.00 ERA (Rick Camp 1.91 in 1980 and Tom House 1.92 in 1974).

Another pleasant surprise was the ability of Kelly Johnson to fill the void at second base created when the Braves didn't offer a contract to Marcus Giles, allowing him to become a free agent. The former No. 1 draft pick who missed all of 2006 recovering from elbow surgery worked long and hard during the off-season with Glenn Hubbard to learn the position and not only played it well, but also was one of the team's more-consistent hitters.

Chipper Jones and Renteria were in the batting race right down to the end of the season, Chipper finally relinquishing the lead in the next-to-last game to Colorado's Matt Holliday. Chipper and Renteria finished second and fourth, but it was Matt Diaz who actually led the team in hitting by a point (.338 to .337) over Chipper, though he didn't have enough plate appearances to qualify for the leaders.

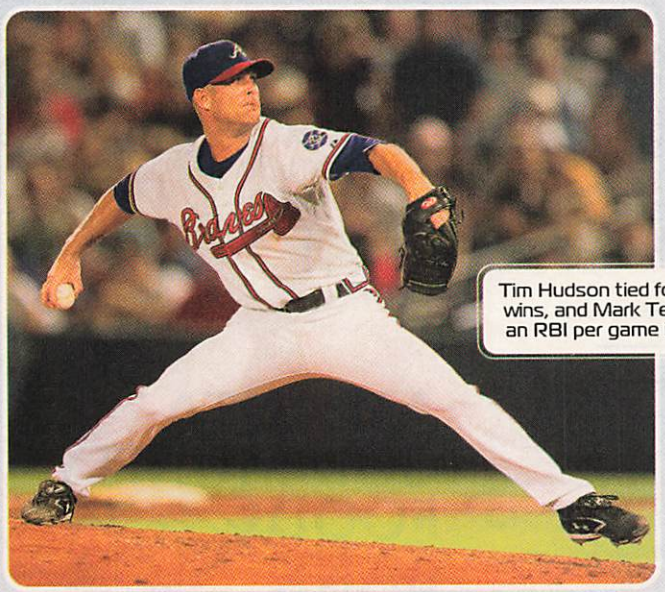
Diaz and Willie Harris shared left field and formed an especially dynamic platoon. Harris tied a franchise record July 21 with a six-hit game against the Cardinals. He became just the second Brave (Felix Millan in 1970) to get six hits in a game in the modern era (post 1900).

Brian McCann, who signed a six-year contract during spring training, was the only Brave at the All-Star Game in San Francisco, giving him back-to-back appearances. Smoltz originally was named to the NL team but was unable to play and did not attend due to soreness in his shoulder.

Jeff Francoeur started every game and continued to flash one of baseball's best arms, recording 19 assists to tie the Cubs' Alfonso Soriano for first among NL outfielders. He also raised his batting average 33 points, from .260 to .293, and had his second straight 100-RBI season (team-high and personal-high 105). He also nearly doubled his walks (42 compared to 23 in '06).

The Braves had nine players hit at least 10 home runs (Chipper 29, Andruw Jones 26, Francoeur 19, McCann 18, Teixeira 17, Johnson 16, Diaz 12, Renteria 12, Thorman 11) - a franchise first - but for the first time since 1997, they did not have a 30-home run man.

Though they struggled to generate offense at home much of the year, the Braves were 44-37 at Turner Field in spite of a .265 batting average compared to .285 on the road.



Tim Hudson tied for fifth in the league with 16 wins, and Mark Teixeira averaged more than an RBI per game in two months as a Brave.

Thank you John for another great season helping those in need!

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It is never too late to get great holiday items autographed by John Smoltz.

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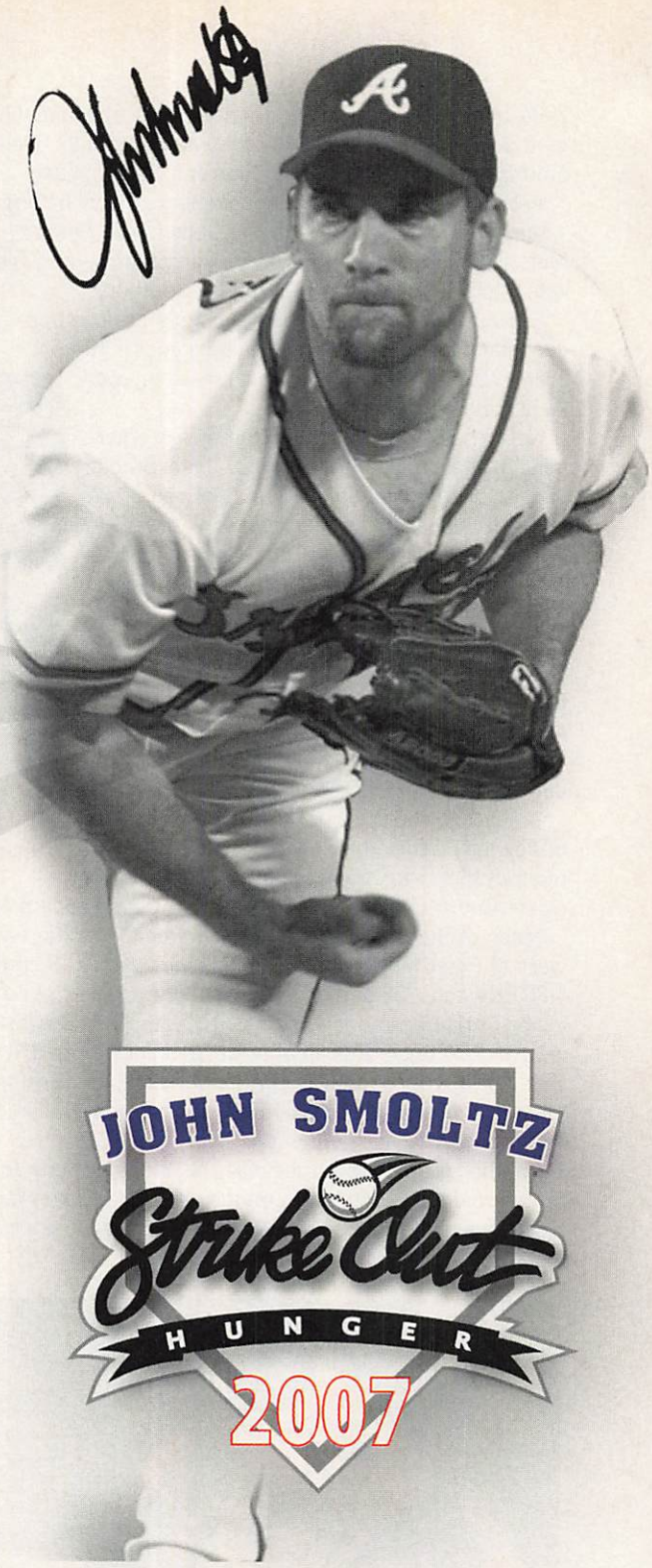

Atlanta Braves pitcher John Smoltz knows it's important to build a better community. That's why John is helping the Atlanta Community Food Bank strike out hunger. We need your help too! You can help Georgians in need by joining John's Strike Out Hunger team. John is donating $100 to the Food Bank for every strikeout this season. And you can receive a sports item autographed by John for every pledge YOU make. As a special thank you for your donation and support, each paid pledge will receive a gift based on the pledge levels shown below. All gifts are tax deductible less the retail value of the item(s) received. All gifts will be autographed by John Smoltz.

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Signed Gear		Total
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Official Bat	$ 400 ___	$___
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All items are	$2500___	$___

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The Strike Out Hunger season begins with the Braves opening home game and ends with the final regular season home game. All items based on availability and will be sent to you at the close of the Braves season and upon receipt of payment.

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FEAST OR FAMINE HITTING COSTLY IN TIGHT GAMES

BY STEVE FALL

THE BRAVES OUT-SCORED their opponents by 77 runs this year. That figure topped all three National League division champions. Obviously, it wasn't enough.

The team's plus-77 run differential led both the NL East champion Phillies (+71) and the second place Mets (+54). The Braves trailed only the Rockies (+102) among NL clubs, and surpassed both the division-winning Cubs (+62) and Diamondbacks (-20). All those teams posted better won-lost records than Atlanta's 84-78.

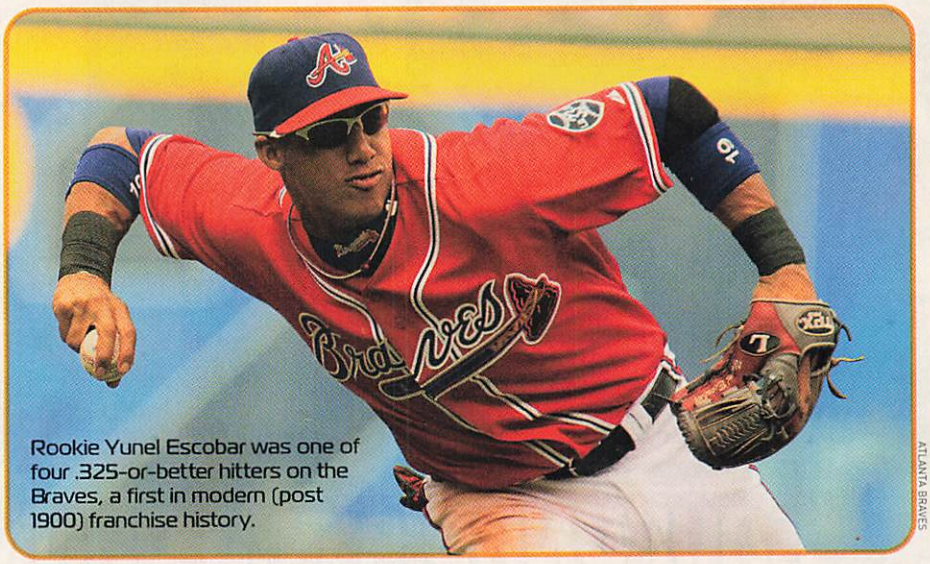
This trend also appears unusual compared to similar teams throughout history. Ten previous clubs have out-scored their opponents by 77 runs. They had a combined .552 winning percentage, which projects to an 89-73 record over a 162-game schedule. Nine of those 10 teams had a better winning percentage than the 2007 Braves' .519 figure. Most exceeded it by a wide margin. The only other club to post a plus-77 run differential since the playoffs expanded in 1995 – the 2004 Dodgers – went 93-69 and won their division.

How could this happen? The Braves played poorly in close games, but excelled in blowout games. They went 18-25 in one-run games and 6-10 in extra innings. But in games decided by eight or more runs, they posted a 13-6 mark. They scored 166 runs and allowed 96 in those games, which created nearly their entire overall run differential for the year.

To summarize: The Braves scored a bunch of extra runs when they weren't needed, and came up short when they needed one or two more runs.

The Braves' offense was truly feast or famine this season. Despite scoring the third-most runs in the NL, Atlanta was shut out 10 times. The Brewers and Mets – who scored slightly fewer runs than the Braves – each were held scoreless just five times. Only five other NL clubs suffered more shutouts than the Braves, but each of them averaged far fewer runs per game than Atlanta.

Although Bobby Cox's team avoided getting shut out in all 43 one-run games, the offense fell off considerably in these tight ballgames. The Braves scored 4.07 runs in one-run games, versus 5.34 in all others. The pitching staff surrendered 4.23 runs in one-run games compared to 4.63 in other games.



Rookie Yunel Escobar was one of four .325-or-better hitters on the Braves, a first in modern (post 1900) franchise history.

ATLANTA BRAVES

While the Braves fell short of a playoff spot, several players had outstanding individual achievements. Chipper Jones (.337), Matt Diaz (.338), Edgar Renteria (.332) and Yunel Escobar (.326) gave the franchise four players with a .325 batting average in at least 300 at-bats for the first time since 1897.

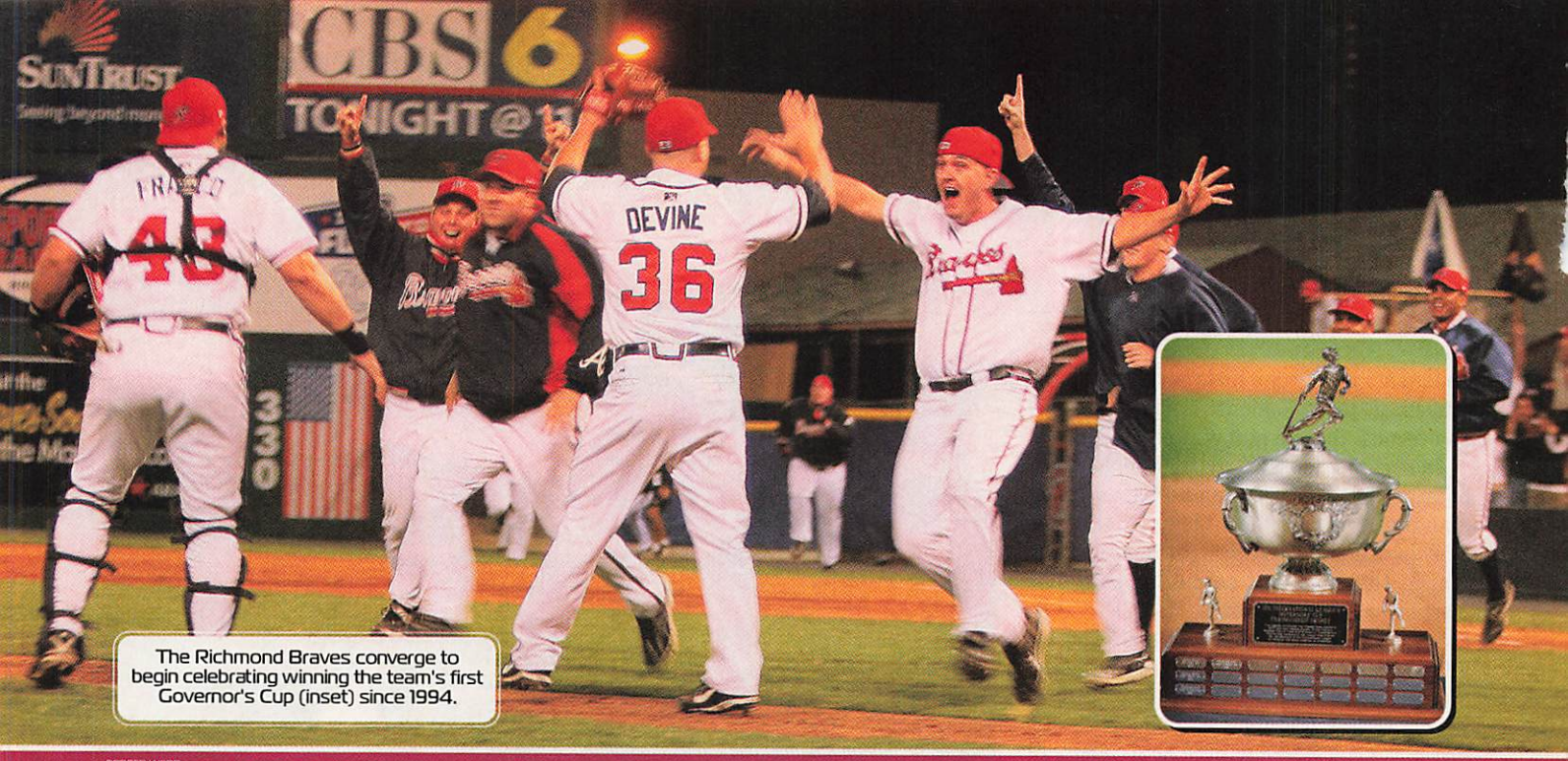
In fact, the team has produced only six other .325 or better seasons since 1975: Jones (.330 in 2001 and .327 in 2002), Brian McCann (.333, 2006), Gary Sheffield (.330, 2003), Javy Lopez (.328, 2003) and Kenny Lofton (.333 in 1997). Although Chipper fell three points short of the NL batting title, he posted the highest average by a Braves' qualifier in over three decades. Ralph Garr hit .353 in 1974.

Kelly Johnson posted superb offensive numbers in his first year playing second base. With 26 doubles, 10 triples and 16 homers, Johnson showed extra-base power rarely displayed at the position. Only three other second basemen since 1960 have reached 25 doubles, 10 triples and 15 home runs in a season: Juan Samuel (four times from 1984-87), Ryne Sandberg (1984), and Roberto Alomar (2001). Bobby Lowe, who played for the 1894 Boston Beaneaters, was the last second baseman in franchise history to match this feat.

Johnson's impressive .831 on-base plus slugging percentage (OPS) also ranks among the best ever by a Braves second baseman. Five others that qualified for the batting title topped his figure, and three of them played a long time ago. Only Rogers Hornsby (1.130 in 1928), Lowe (.921, 1894), Marcus Giles (.917, 2003), Dave Johnson (.916, 1973), and Bill Sweeney (.861, 1912) had higher OPS figures than Johnson.

By reaching the 100-RBI plateau for the second straight year, Jeff Francoeur became the 23rd major leaguer to drive in 100 runs in both his age-22 and 23 seasons. That list features 10 Hall of Fame players: Eddie Mathews, Joe DiMaggio, Jimmie Foxx, Mel Ott, Ted Williams, Nap Lajoie, Joe Medwick, Tony Lazzeri, Al Simmons and Joe Kelley. Mathews – the only other Brave on the list – did this in 1954-55.

Francoeur's durability makes him even more unique. Only two other players – Hall of Famer Cal Ripken Jr. and former Cubs great Ron Santo – appeared in all 162 games in both their age-22 and 23 seasons. Expanding the criteria to players 25 years old and under adds just a few more players to the group - Brooks Robinson, Sal Bando, Alfredo Griffin, and Grady Sizemore.



The Richmond Braves converge to begin celebrating winning the team's first Governor's Cup (inset) since 1994.

RODGER WOOD

GOVERNOR'S CUP RUNNETH OVER FOR INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE CHAMPS

BY BILL BALLEW

GOVERNORS' CUP 2007 PLAYOFFS

AS MANAGER of the Chicago Cubs in the early 1980s, Lee Elia detested doubleheaders, citing the negative results in two of the three possible outcomes on the day.

Richmond manager Dave Brundage holds no such views on doubleheaders, especially after his club swept a day-night doubleheader over Durham Sept. 15 to win the International League's Governors' Cup Championship.

Brundage, in his first season in the Braves' organization, had good reason for confidence entering the playoff finale, because Richmond swept four of its six regular-season doubleheaders and split the other two. The man known as "Brundy" felt his club had the Durham Bulls (Triple-A affiliate of the Tampa Bay Devil Rays) right where it wanted them for the final date of the Governors' Cup championship.

"We relished the challenge of having to sweep the doubleheader to win the title," said Brundage, referring to Richmond's test that was created when Game 4 was rained out the previous day at The Diamond in Richmond. "Our guys thrived every time they were faced with a challenge, and that day proved to be no different."

Trailing the Bulls two games to one in the best-of-five series, Richmond responded in the opener of the doubleheader behind six strong innings from righthander Jeff Bennett to defeat Durham, 6-2, and force a fifth and deciding game that evening.

Turns out, outfielder Doug Clark - the heart and soul of this Richmond team - faced a similar feat in college. In 1996, the University of Massachusetts had to sweep Virginia Tech in the NCAA regional in order to advance, and Clark and his teammates, who included reliever Chad Paronto, emerged successful. The 31-year-old outfielder put his vast experience to use by hitting a three-run homer in the first inning and driving in four to lead Richmond to a 7-2 victory in the championship game.

"It was very fitting that Doug hit the big home run and then caught the final out of the game to seal the championship," said Kurt Kemp, Atlanta's director of player development. "Doug was a six-year free agent we signed last winter who really integrated into our system and carried the team on and off the field. We had a couple of other veteran guys like Iker Franco and Larry Bigbie do the same thing, which played a major role in the team's success."

With the help of a franchise-best 27-11 start, Richmond resided in first place in the International League's South Division most of the season before losing the top spot to Durham on Aug. 22. Refusing to quit, Richmond earned the wild-card spot in the playoffs and defeated Scranton/Wilkes-Barre, three games to one, in the first round. Richmond then took the first game of the series with the Bulls, 4-2, on Sept. 11, behind another strong start by Bennett.

Durham won the second and third games, in spite of Francisley Bueno pitching six no-hit innings in Game 3, only to be pulled due to his pitch count.

"We put a real heavy emphasis on winning that first game," Brundage said. "Bennett was our best pitcher down the stretch, and he really came through for us in the post-season with three great starts."

After disposing of Durham and dousing one another with champagne, Richmond had one final piece of business. For the second consecutive year, the winners of the International and Pacific Coast

RODGER WOOD

After taking a doubleheader from Durham for the International League title, the Triple-A Braves pile it on.

leagues met for a single game in Oklahoma City in the Bricktown Showdown. The Sacramento River Cats, champions of the PCL, scored five runs in the third inning off Richmond starter Blaine Boyer and proceeded to win the nationally televised game, 7-1, on Sept. 18.

Despite the final game disappointment, Richmond put together a most remarkable season in winning their fifth Governors' Cup in franchise history, their first since 1994. Fifty-nine players wore the Richmond uniform during the 2007 season, one shy of the club record of 60 set in 2005. Twenty received promotions to Atlanta, and 12 of the R-Braves' 24-man playoff roster were called up from Double-A Mississippi or Class A Myrtle Beach during the year. Seven players - Clark, Franco, Gregor Blanco, Buddy Hernandez, Trey Hodges, Carlos Mendez and Wes Timmons - were with Richmond for the entire schedule.

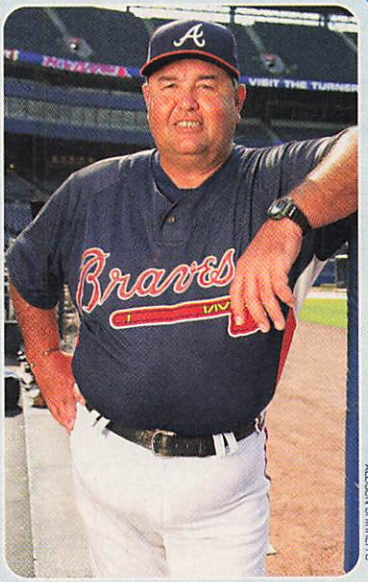
"To have as many players as we did over the course of the season speaks volumes for the Atlanta organization," said Brundage. "The key was the guys that were here. This team had more character and better chemistry than any team I've ever been around, particularly at the Triple-A level."

According to Brundage, the team's supportive nature helped spawn such success stories as that of Derrick Arnold, who was a utility player nearly all season at Myrtle Beach but contributed the game-winning sacrifice fly against Scranton/Wilkes-Barre. Another example was Mike Rozema, who also spent time in the Class A Carolina League this season, yet produced eight hits and six RBIs in the nine playoff games.

"All 24 guys on the playoff roster contributed," Kemp said. "When you look at how Brundy and his staff prepared players for the major leagues and continued to maintain a winning atmosphere despite all the changes, that in my mind is the perfect scenario in the minor leagues."

HOW I MADE IT TO THE MAJORS

CHINO CADAHIA
BENCH COACH



ALLISON SHIRREFFS

BY STEVE FALL

CHINO CADAHIA faced a long climb through the ranks of professional baseball, but his patience finally paid off. He now works alongside one of the greatest managers in history.

"The thing I like most about my job is being next to Bobby Cox, and learning from him about how he handles a game and how prepared he is," said Cadahia. "That experience is second to none. So, it's been a great experience, to say the least - to be around him, the rest of the staff, and the players that we have."

Cadahia studies scouting reports to see how the Braves should pitch and defend against opposing clubs. He'll move fielders around from the dugout if they're not correctly positioned. Before the game, he distributes the lineup cards to the umpires, opposing team, and bullpen. He also posts a copy of the lineup in the Braves' clubhouse. Throughout the game, he maintains the lineup card for Cox and the rest of the dugout.

After spending 30 years in the minor leagues as a player, coach and manager, the 49-year-old Cadahia is thrilled to have this opportunity.

"Fortunately, I got my break this last year, and it's been great," he said. "I always said that this was the ultimate – to be here. Of course, I wanted to be a major league ballplayer, but I wasn't good enough. But the desire to teach and be around young kids and teach them all the things that I learned was always in my blood. I always wanted to do this."

Born in Havana, Cuba, Cadahia came to the United States in November 1968 at age 11. He spent the remainder of his youth in Hialeah, Florida, outside Miami. There he went to see some great Orioles teams – with stars like Brooks Robinson, Jim Palmer and Boog Powell – play spring training games. He also enjoyed watching Pete Rose and Tony Oliva on television.

Cadahia played baseball in high school and at Miami-Dade Community College. After being drafted and signed in 1977 by Philadelphia, he played catcher in both the Phillies and Twins organizations. He reached Triple-A in 1981 with the Toledo Mud Hens, but never got called up to the big leagues.

In 1984, Cadahia became a coach in the Rangers' organization. After two years as a pitching coach in the Class-A Carolina league, he managed 10 straight years in the Rangers' minor league chain. He managed Port Charlotte in the Gulf Coast League from 1988 through 1995, finishing above .500 in six of those eight seasons.

Cadahia joined the Braves in 1996. He worked two years as the roving catching instructor before becoming the minor league field coordinator in November 1997. He held that spot for nine years before becoming the bench coach this season.

Cadahia believes it takes hard work and patience for coaches to reach the majors.

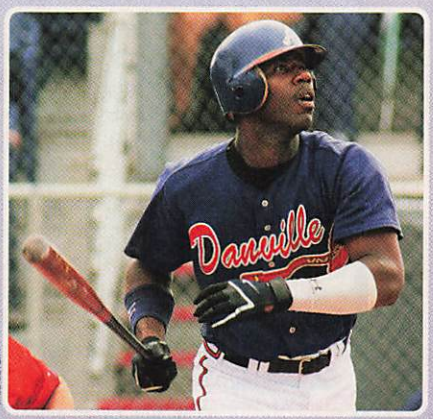
"For those guys that are in the minor leagues – and there are a lot of them that have spent many years in the minor leagues – you've got to stay patient. The right break has got to come," said Cadahia.

BY BILL BALLEW

TEHERAN AND HEYWARD ALREADY DRAWING RAVE REVIEWS IN FLORIDA

THE AUDIENCE CONSISTS of little more than two dozen scouts from various major league teams, but the initial reactions coming from the Braves' Instructional League camp at Disney's Wide World of Sports in Florida indicate the organization's next wave of premier talent could one day have a significant impact in the major leagues.

Pitcher Julio Teheran and outfielder Jason Heyward are drawing the greatest responses from the scouts of opposing teams. The two teenagers signed with the Braves this past summer - Teheran for $850,000 out of Colombia and Heyward for $1.7 million as the team's first-round draft pick. Both have shown exceptional ability for their age and are already being mentioned as potential contributors in Atlanta by the beginning of the next decade.



BILL SETLIFF

Jason Heyward was the Braves' first-round draft pick in June.

Teheran, a 16-year-old who came to terms with the Braves on July 2, the first day of the international signing date, has been as good as advertised. Mature beyond his years, both on the mound and off the field, the righthander has been throwing strikes with four pitches. His fastball is consistently clocked in the mid-90s, making it one of the best in the organization. He also throws a two-seam fastball with a sharp downward break, a changeup and a curveball.

"His changeup is as advanced as I've ever seen for such a young pitcher," said one National League scout. "He really has a great idea of what he's doing out there. His curveball is 78, 79 (mph) with a late, hard bite. His changeup is 81, 82 (mph) with a good sinking action. He's working on the command of all his pitches, but he has a chance to be a special pitcher with his stuff and a raw ability."

Heyward has attracted similar praise during Instructional League. He's displayed power to all fields, as well as impressive patience and a keen knowledge of the strike zone. Only 18, the 6-foot-4, 220-pound Heyward, who hails from McDonough, Ga., just south of Atlanta, also has shown a strong arm in right field that has nailed runners trying to take an extra base.

"He's a man among boys out there," said the NL scout. "Physically, he is very strong, and he's an outstanding all-around athlete. It's amazing to me a guy like that was still on the (draft) board with the 14th overall pick."

Another newcomer to the organization who has impressed during his first extended performance with the Braves is Erik Cordier, acquired from the Royals at the end of spring training for shortstop T.J. Pena. He's making a strong return after missing the entire 2007 season with ligament replacement surgery on his right elbow. Cordier throws four pitches for strikes and does a good job of keeping hitters off-balance. His velocity, which includes a fastball that has been clocked as high as 97 mph, has yet to return, but the Braves are encouraged with the arm strength he has shown thus far in Florida.

ALOHA, BRAVES

AFTER A BRIEF three-week break, the season continued for four Atlanta farmhands, as well as Rome manager Randy Ingle, who is currently guiding the Honolulu Sharks in Hawaiian Winter Baseball. The Braves are one of 24 major league teams and seven clubs from Japan's Nippon Professional Baseball supplying players for the league that consists mostly of Class-A players. Each of the league's four teams is playing a 40-game schedule that runs through Nov. 19.

Catcher Phillip Britton, who hit .287 at Rome in 2007 and had a pair of hits in his first five games with the Sharks, is working on improving his exchange on throws to second base, as well as his overall footwork behind the plate.

Tyler Flowers had two hits and five walks in his first six games with Honolulu and is seeing much of his time at first base, which is where he played at Rome and tied for second in the organization with 70 RBIs. Flowers also worked at catcher in one of his early games in Hawaii in preparation for the 2008 season.

"Tyler is one of the best defensive receivers we have in the organization," said Matt Price, Atlanta's assistant director of player development. "He had knee surgery in March, and we didn't want to press the issue this season. We want to get him a little time back there this fall in order to give him a head-start in the spring."

Relievers Kris Medlen and Tyler Wilson had some early success in Hawaii after strong showings during the regular season. Medlen struck out the side in two of his first three appearances and owned eight strikeouts and a save with no walks in his first three innings. Wilson posted seven strikeouts and allowed one earned run in his first 4 1/3 innings.

PLAYERS OF THE YEAR

THE BRAVES recognized their minor league pitchers and players of the year for each of their seven teams at Turner Field on Sept. 22. The recipients were:

RICHMOND

Pitcher: Manny Acosta (RH) - Ranked second on the team in saves (12) and wins (9).

Player: Brent Lillibridge, shortstop - Led the organization with 42 steals and was named by manager Dave Brundage as the team's most improved player.

MISSISSIPPI

Pitcher: Joey Devine (RH) - Ranked second in the organization in saves (20) before posting four more for Richmond in the playoffs.

Player: Brandon Jones, outfielder - Earned all-star honors in the Southern League and drove in an organization-best 100 runs between Mississippi and Richmond.

MYRTLE BEACH

Pitcher: Sung Ki Jung (RH) - After spending two years in the South Korean military, Jung returned to lead the organization with 23 saves.

Player: Jordan Schafer, outfielder - Led the minor leagues with 176 hits and ranked third with 49 doubles.

ROME

Pitcher: Tommy Hanson (RH) - Won only five games between Rome and Myrtle Beach, but ranked second among full-season pitchers with a 3.32 ERA.

Player: Tyler Flowers, first baseman - In first full season in the organization, ranked eighth in batting average (.298) and tied for second in RBIs.

DANVILLE

Pitcher: Jeff Locke (LH) - Paced Danville in wins (seven) while posting a 2.66 ERA.

Player: Cody Johnson, outfielder - 2006 first-round draft pick easily led Appy League with 17 home runs.

GULF COAST

Pitcher: Eric Barrett (LH) - Draft-and-follow signee in May was the team's most consistent pitcher.

Player: Samuel Sime, shortstop - Led team in most offensive categories and tied for ninth in the organization with a .295 batting average.

DOMINICAN SUMMER LEAGUE

Pitcher: Dimasther Delgado (LH) - Struck out 86 in 59 1/3 innings while walking only 12.

Player: Anthony Feliz, outfielder - Led team in runs (31) and doubles (16) and ranked second in hits (53) and RBIs (30).

THE REASON WE WON WAS OUR CHARACTER

EDITOR'S NOTE
Doug Clark, a 31-year-old outfielder, signed with the Braves as a minor league free agent last December. He had brief big league callups with San Francisco (five at-bats in 2005) and Oakland (six at-bats in 2006) and this year led Richmond in doubles, home runs, RBIs and total bases.

EVERY TIME I GO into a baseball season, I set short-term and long-term goals. Heading into spring training last March for the first time with Atlanta, I wanted to make a good first impression, and I think I showed them some little things I could do.

Once the season started, I was going to an unfamiliar place in Richmond and unfamiliar territory in the International League after spending most of my time in the Pacific Coast League. As it turned out, I had a solid year with some of the usual ups and downs. But any time you can depart having won a championship, that is truly a special moment in anyone's career.

What amazed me about the Richmond club this year is how many guys contributed. Usually when you're winning, you're going to have a close-knit club, and the chemistry is going to work. Guys are buying into the concept of accomplishing things as a unit. As we continued to play well, everyone really seemed to connect with each other. We won together and we lost together, and that enabled us to bounce back at the end when our backs were against the wall.

The reason the team was able to stay together was based on the character of the guys the Braves sent to Richmond. From the manager, Dave Brundage, to the coaches, Rock Hansen and Leon Roberts, and our trainer, Mike Grouse, through all the players, everyone had a characteristic on that club that contributed to our success. It was an ideal group of people, which oftentimes is hard to find at the Triple-A level.

> "TO ACCOMPLISH THAT GOAL OF A CHAMPIONSHIP WILL DEFINITELY BE ONE OF THE GREATEST HIGHLIGHTS OF MY CAREER."

What was even more impressive is the way we would lose our top guys, especially our best pitchers, to promotions, yet the replacements would come in and have success, as well. They were fully aware of the task at hand, and like the guys who had been there from the start, they were not satisfied with just being at Richmond. They wanted to make an impact.

Dave created an environment by telling us at the beginning of the year that it was our team. He would be the guy who made out the lineup and pushed the buttons, but he really emphasized that the guys in the clubhouse had to police themselves and take care of business.

Of course, when you win a championship, you never know how the game is going to end. It was a treat to have that ball in my hand for the final out. I gave the ball to Dave. I know he doesn't expect much in return from his players for all the work he puts into his job, but it was rewarding for me to be able to give him the ball as a symbol for all he had done.

I really went out on a limb throughout the season, especially during the second half, to become a leader on the team. I wanted to be a leader in the clubhouse as well as on the field, and sometimes that can be difficult. That added some pressure on me to go out and perform, but I felt the guys needed it.

There was a small group of older players who did what needed to be done to keep everyone focused and in line. Guys would joke around and call me "Captain," but I turned it back on them and told them everyone had a job to do to get us to where we wanted to be.

To accomplish that goal of a championship will definitely be one of the greatest highlights of my career.

FARM LEADERS

HITTING

BATTING AVERAGE (Min. 2.7 PA/Game)

Cole Miles	Danville/Rome	.317
Martin Prado	Richmond	.316
Jordan Schafer	Rome/Myrtle Beach	.312
J.C. Holt	Mississippi/Richmond	.309
Diory Hernandez	Myrtle Beach/Mississippi	.308
Cody Johnson	Danville	.305
Carl Loadenthal	Mississippi	.300
Tyler Flowers	Rome	.298
Brandon Jones	Mississippi/Richmond	.295
Samuel Sime	Gulf Coast	.295

HOME RUNS

Kala Ka'aihue	Myrtle Beach/Mississippi	22
Matt Esquivel	Mississippi	19
Brandon Jones	Mississippi/Richmond	19
Cody Johnson	Danville	17
Jon Mark Owings	Rome	16
Doug Clark	Richmond	15
Jordan Schafer	Rome/Myrtle Beach	15
Eric Campbell	Myrtle Beach	14
Brent Lillibridge	Mississippi/Richmond	13
Tyler Flowers	Rome	12

RBIs

Brandon Jones	Mississippi/Richmond	100
Matt Esquivel	Mississippi	70
Tyler Flowers	Rome	70
Doug Clark	Richmond	69
Kala Ka'aihue	Myrtle Beach/Mississippi	69
Diory Hernandez	Myrtle Beach/Mississippi	68
Quentin Davis	Myrtle Beach	65
Jordan Schafer	Rome/Myrtle Beach	63
Brent Lillibridge	Mississippi/Richmond	58
Cody Johnson	Danville	57

RUNS

Jordan Schafer	Rome/Myrtle Beach	86
Brandon Jones	Mississippi/Richmond	84
Gregor Blanco	Richmond	81
Brent Lillibridge	Mississippi/Richmond	78
Doug Clark	Richmond	75
Carl Loadenthal	Mississippi	72
Kala Ka'aihue	Myrtle Beach/Mississippi	71
Matt Esquivel	Mississippi	66
Tyler Flowers	Rome	65
Jon Mark Owings	Rome	62
Yohan Silva	Rome	62

STOLEN BASES

Brent Lillibridge	Mississippi/Richmond	42
Carl Loadenthal	Mississippi	40
Quentin Davis	Myrtle Beach	37
Diory Hernandez	Myrtle Beach/Mississippi	24
Jordan Schafer	Rome/Myrtle Beach	23
J.C. Holt	Mississippi/Richmond	23

STOLEN BASES - cont.

Gregor Blanco	Richmond	23
Doug Clark	Richmond	20
Brandon Jones	Mississippi/Richmond	17
Jonathan Schuerholz	Mississippi/Richmond	16

ON-BASE PCT. (Min. 250 PA)

Travis Jones	Danville/Rome	.390
Carl Loadenthal	Mississippi	.383
Cole Miles	Danville/Rome	.381
Chase Fontaine	Rome/Myrtle Beach	.380
Tyler Flowers	Rome	.378
J.C. Holt	Mississippi/Richmond	.376
Jordan Schafer	Rome/Myrtle Beach	.374
Martin Prado	Richmond	.374
Cody Johnson	Danville	.374
Gregor Blanco	Richmond	.369

DOUBLES

Jordan Schafer	Rome/Myrtle Beach	49
Tyler Flowers	Rome	34
Brandon Jones	Mississippi/Richmond	33
Diory Hernandez	Myrtle Beach/Mississippi	33
Mark Jurich	Mississippi	32
Danny Brezeale	Rome	27
Kala Ka'aihue	Myrtle Beach/Mississippi	25
Concepcion Rodriguez	Rome	24
Doug Clark	Richmond	23
Martin Prado	Richmond	23
Van Pope	Mississippi	23

TRIPLES

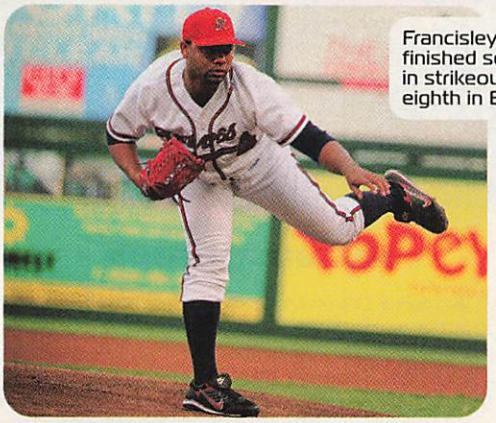
Quentin Davis	Myrtle Beach	11
Jordan Schafer	Rome/Myrtle Beach	10
Brandon Jones	Mississippi/Richmond	7
Chase Fontaine	Rome/Myrtle Beach	6
J.C. Holt	Mississippi/Richmond	5
Brent Lillibridge	Mississippi/Richmond	5
Carl Loadenthal	Mississippi	5
Gregor Blanco	Richmond	5
Cody Johnson	Danville	5

WALKS

Chase Fontaine	Rome/Myrtle Beach	66
Kala Ka'aihue	Myrtle Beach/Mississippi	64
Gregor Blanco	Richmond	63
Carl Loadenthal	Mississippi	62
Brandon Jones	Mississippi/Richmond	61
Doug Clark	Richmond	59
Yohan Silva	Rome	59
Jordan Schafer	Rome/Myrtle Beach	56

SLUGGING PCT. (Min. 235 ABs)

Cody Johnson	Danville	.630
Ernesto Mejia	Danville/Rome	.533
Jordan Schafer	Rome/Myrtle Beach	.513
Brandon Jones	Mississippi/Richmond	.490
Tyler Flowers	Rome	.488
Matt Esquivel	Mississippi	.454
Phillip Britton	Rome/Mississippi	.449
Doug Clark	Richmond	.443
Diory Hernandez	Myrtle Beach/Mississippi	.429



PHOTOS: ROGER WOOD

Francisley Bueno finished seventh in strikeouts and eighth in ERA.

Shortstop Brent Lillibridge led the farm system in steals and was among the leaders in home runs, RBIs, runs and triples.

PITCHING

ERA (Min. 0.8 IP/G)

Cole Rohrbough	Danville/Rome	1.17
Jose Ortegano	Danville	1.48
Eric Barrett	Danville	1.75
Edgar Osuna	Danville	2.47
Jeff Locke	Danville	2.66
Jamie Richmond	Rome	3.05
Tommy Hanson	Rome/Myrtle Beach	3.39
Francisley Bueno	Mississippi/Richmond	3.55
Jairo Cuevas	Myrtle Beach	3.55
Deunte Heath	Rome/Myrtle Beach	3.69

WINS

Moises Hernandez	Myrtle Beach/Mississippi	12
Jo-Jo Reyes	Mississippi/Richmond	12
Mike Broadway	Rome	11
Manny Acosta	Richmond	9
Buddy Hernandez	Richmond	9
Brad Nelson	MB/Miss/Richmond	9
Kelvin Villa	Mississippi	8
Jamie Richmond	Rome	7
James Parr	Myrtle Beach/Mississippi	7
Dan Smith	Mississippi/Richmond	7
Jeff Locke	Danville	7

STRIKEOUTS

Tommy Hanson	Rome/Myrtle Beach	154
Carlos Sencion	Myrtle Beach	138
Kelvin Villa	Mississippi	121
Jairo Cuevas	Myrtle Beach	116
James Parr	Myrtle Beach/Mississippi	112
Jamie Richmond	Rome	98
Francisley Bueno	Mississippi/Richmond	96
Deunte Heath	Rome/Myrtle Beach	94
Kyle Cofield	Rome	90

INNINGS

Kelvin Villa	Mississippi	143.2
Moises Hernandez	Myrtle Beach/Mississippi	141.0
Jamie Richmond	Rome	138.2
Jeff Lyman	Rome/Myrtle Beach	135.1
Tommy Hanson	Rome/Myrtle Beach	133.0

INNINGS - cont.

Francisley Bueno	Mississippi/Richmond	133.0
Jairo Cuevas	Myrtle Beach	132.0
Deunte Heath	Rome/Myrtle Beach	126.2
Trey Hodges	Richmond	122.0
Timothy Gustafson	Rome	111.1

WHIP (Walks + Hits per IP)

Sung Ki Jung	Myrtle Beach/Mississippi	0.87
Steve Evarts	Danville	0.89
Jose Ortegano	Danville	0.91
Jeff Locke	Danville	0.92
Kris Medlen	Rome/Myrtle Beach	1.01
Buddy Carlyle	Richmond	1.01

OPPONENTS BATTING AVG.

Cole Rohrbough	Danville/Rome	.154
Nick Fellman	Danville	.157
Eric Barrett	Danville	.173
Sung Ki Jung	Myrtle Beach/Mississippi	.186
Zach Schreiber	Mississippi/Richmond	.188

SAVES

Sung Ki Jung	Myrtle Beach/Mississippi	23
Joey Devine	Mississippi/Richmond	20
Nick Fellman	Danville	16
Manny Acosta	Richmond	12
Kris Medlen	Myrtle Beach/Mississippi	11
Jose Ascanio	Mississippi	10
Ryne Reynoso	Rome	9

WALKS Per 9 IP (Min. 20 IP)

Steve Evarts	Danville	0.97
Jeff Locke	Danville	1.18
Jose Ortegano	Danville	1.63
Edgar Osuna	Danville	1.81
Steve Kent	Gulf Coast	1.93

ATLANTA

TO PURCHASE SEASON TICKETS OR FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL (404) 577-9100 OR VISIT braves.com

TICKET INFO

At press time, the Braves had not announced the 2008 schedule or ticket information. Refundable deposits of $100 for full and partial season tickets are being accepted at Braves.com or by calling (404) 577-9100.

SPRING TRAINING

Tickets for the 2008 Atlanta Braves Spring Training home games at Disney's Wide World of Sports complex in Lake Buena Vista, Fla., will go on sale Jan. 5. Call (407) 939-GAME (4263) for prices and additional information, including details on season and group tickets. Game times have not been released, and the following schedule is tentative, incomplete and subject to change.

FEBRUARY

27 - University of Georgia @ Disney.
28 - TBA.
29 - Dodgers @ Disney.

MARCH

1 - Braves vs. Houston @ Kissimmee.
2 - Houston @ Disney.
3 - TBA.
4 - Philadelphia @ Disney.
5 - Braves vs. Cleveland @ Winter Haven.
6 - TBA.
7 - Detroit @ Disney.
8 - Houston @ Disney.
9 - St. Louis @ Disney.
10 - St. Louis @ Disney.
11 - Washington @ Disney.
12 - Braves vs. Cleveland @ Winter Haven.
13 - Braves vs. Detroit @ Lakeland.
14 - Braves vs. Phillies @ Clearwater.
15 - TBA.
16 - Braves vs. St. Louis @ Jupiter.
17 - Braves vs. St. Louis @ Jupiter.
18 - TBA.
19 - TBA.
20 - TBA.
21 - Mets @ Disney.
22 - Cleveland @ Disney.
23 - Braves vs. Pittsburgh @ Bradenton.
24 - Yankees @ Disney.
25 - Detroit @ Disney.
26 - Braves vs. Astros @ Kissimmee.
27 - TBA.
28 - TBA.
29 - TBA.
30 - TBA.

MUSEUM & TOUR INFO

The Ivan Allen Jr. Braves Museum features more than 500 Braves artifacts that trace the team's history from its beginnings in Boston (1871-1952) to Milwaukee (1953-65) to Atlanta (1966-present). It is located on the northwest side of Turner Field at aisle 134. The museum opens two and a half hours before each game and closes in the middle of the seventh inning. The museum is open year-round and is the starting point of one-hour guided tours of Turner Field. Tours leave on the hour.

Tour reservations are not necessary for individuals or groups of less than 20 people. Tickets can be purchased the day of the tour at the main ticket window. Free parking in the Green lot.

Admission to the museum during games is one token ($2) and $5 on non-game days. Tour tickets are $10 for adults, $5 for children and $7 for groups of 20 or more. Walk-up tickets can be purchased at the ticket window. Groups of 20 or more and school groups must make reservations two weeks in advance by calling (404) 614-2311.

THE IVAN ALLEN JR. BRAVES MUSEUM & HALL of FAME 1871 1953 1966

HOURS OF OPERATION

APRIL - OCTOBER
Monday - Saturday ..... 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Sunday ..... 1 - 3 p.m.

OCTOBER - MARCH
Monday - Saturday ..... 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

DEC. 23-JAN. 3 ..... CLOSED

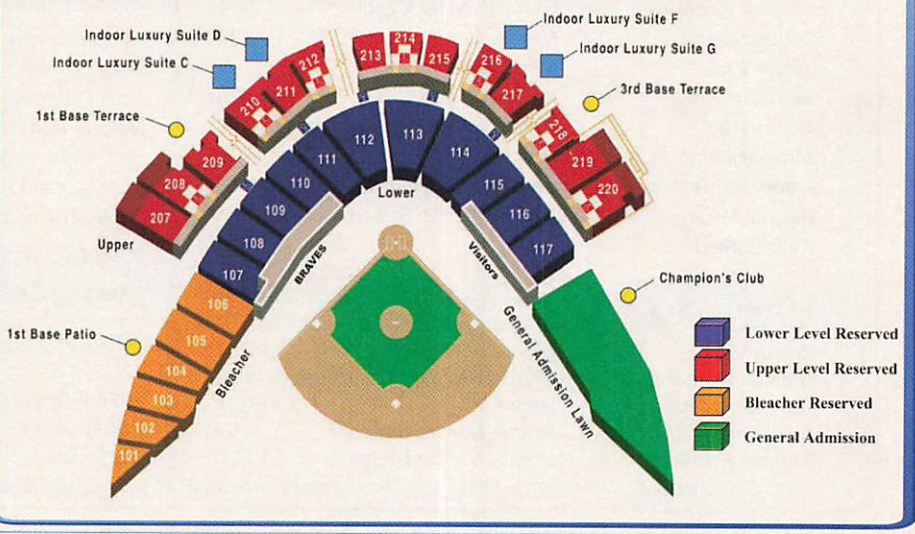
TOUR TICKETS

ADULTS $10
CHILDREN 13 and Under $5

*Subject to change

Tours not available when the Braves have afternoon home games

THE BALLPARK AT DISNEY'S WIDE WORLD OF SPORTS® COMPLEX



2008 ATLANTA BRAVES SCHEDULE

Tentative. Subject To Change. Game times and broadcast information to be released later.
Turner Field Games in Bold

MARCH

Friday, Mar. 28 Cleveland*
Saturday, Mar. 29 Cleveland*
Monday, Mar. 31 Pittsburgh

APRIL

Wednesday, April 2 Pittsburgh
Thursday, April 3 Pittsburgh
Friday, April 4 Mets
Saturday, April 5 Mets
Sunday, April 6 Mets
Monday, April 7 at Colorado
Tuesday, April 8 at Colorado
Wednesday, April 9 at Colorado
Thursday, April 10 at Colorado
Friday, April 11 at Washington
Saturday, April 12 at Washington
Sunday, April 13 at Washington
Tuesday, April 15 at Florida
Wednesday, April 16 at Florida
Thursday, April 17 at Florida
Friday, April 18 Dodgers
Saturday, April 19 Dodgers
Sunday, April 20 Dodgers
Monday, April 21 Washington
Tuesday, April 22 Washington
Wednesday, April 23 Florida
Thursday, April 24 Florida
Friday, April 25 at Mets
Saturday, April 26 at Mets
Sunday, April 27 at Mets
Monday, April 28 at Washington
Tuesday, April 29 at Washington
Wednesday, April 30 at Washington

MAY

Friday, May 2 Cincinnati
Saturday, May 3 Cincinnati
Sunday, May 4 Cincinnati
Tuesday, May 6 San Diego
Wednesday, May 7 San Diego
Thursday, May 8 San Diego
Friday, May 9 at Pittsburgh
Saturday, May 10 at Pittsburgh
Sunday, May 11 at Pittsburgh
Monday, May 12 at Pittsburgh
Tuesday, May 13 at Philadelphia
Wednesday, May 14 at Philadelphia
Thursday, May 15 at Philadelphia
Friday, May 16 Oakland
Saturday, May 17 Oakland
Sunday, May 18 Oakland
Tuesday, May 20 Mets
Wednesday, May 21 Mets
Thursday, May 22 Mets
Friday, May 23 Arizona
Saturday, May 24 Arizona
Sunday, May 25 Arizona
Monday, May 26 Arizona
Tuesday, May 27 at Milwaukee
Wednesday, May 28 at Milwaukee
Thursday, May 29 at Milwaukee
Friday, May 30 at Cincinnati
Saturday, May 31 at Cincinnati

JUNE

Sunday, June 1 at Cincinnati
Monday, June 2 Florida
Tuesday, June 3 Florida
Wednesday, June 4 Florida
Thursday, June 5 Florida
Friday, June 6 Philadelphia
Saturday, June 7 Philadelphia
Sunday, June 8 Philadelphia
Tuesday, June 10 at Cubs
Wednesday, June 11 at Cubs
Thursday, June 12 at Cubs
Friday, June 13 at Angels
Saturday, June 14 at Angels
Sunday, June 15 at Angels
Tuesday, June 17 at Texas
Wednesday, June 18 at Texas
Thursday, June 19 at Texas
Friday, June 20 Seattle
Saturday, June 21 Seattle
Sunday, June 22 Seattle
Monday, June 23 Milwaukee
Tuesday, June 24 Milwaukee
Wednesday, June 25 Milwaukee
Friday, June 27 at Toronto
Saturday, June 28 at Toronto
Sunday, June 29 at Toronto

JULY

Tuesday, July 1 Philadelphia
Wednesday, July 2 Philadelphia
Thursday, July 3 Philadelphia
Friday, July 4 Houston
Saturday, July 5 Houston
Sunday, July 6 Houston
Monday, July 7 at Dodgers
Tuesday, July 8 at Dodgers
Wednesday, July 9 at Dodgers
Friday, July 11 at San Diego
Saturday, July 12 at San Diego
Sunday, July 13 at San Diego
Monday, July 14 All-Star Break
Tuesday, July 15 All-Star Game at Yankee Stadium
Wednesday, July 16 All-Star Break
Thursday, July 17 All-Star Break
Friday, July 18 Washington
Saturday, July 19 Washington
Sunday, July 20 Washington
Monday, July 21 at Florida
Tuesday, July 22 at Florida
Wednesday, July 23 at Florida
Friday, July 25 at Philadelphia
Saturday, July 26 at Philadelphia
Sunday, July 27 at Philadelphia
Monday, July 28 St. Louis
Tuesday, July 29 St. Louis
Wednesday, July 30 St. Louis
Thursday, July 31 St. Louis

AUGUST

Friday, Aug. 1 Milwaukee
Saturday, Aug. 2 Milwaukee
Sunday, Aug. 3 Milwaukee
Monday, Aug. 4 at San Francisco
Tuesday, Aug. 5 at San Francisco
Wednesday, Aug. 6 at San Francisco
Thursday, Aug. 7 at Arizona
Friday, Aug. 8 at Arizona
Saturday, Aug. 9 at Arizona
Sunday, Aug. 10 at Arizona
Tuesday, Aug. 12 Cubs
Wednesday, Aug. 13 Cubs
Thursday, Aug. 14 Cubs
Friday, Aug. 15 San Francisco
Saturday, Aug. 16 San Francisco
Sunday, Aug. 17 San Francisco
Monday, Aug. 18 San Francisco
Tuesday, Aug. 19 at Mets
Wednesday, Aug. 20 at Mets
Thursday, Aug. 21 at Mets
Friday, Aug. 22 at St. Louis
Saturday, Aug. 23 at St. Louis
Sunday, Aug. 24 at St. Louis
Tuesday, Aug. 26 Florida
Wednesday, Aug. 27 Florida
Thursday, Aug. 28 Florida
Friday, Aug. 29 at Washington
Saturday, Aug. 30 at Washington
Sunday, Aug. 31 at Washington

SEPTEMBER

Monday, Sept. 1 at Florida
Tuesday, Sept. 2 at Florida
Wednesday, Sept. 3 at Florida
Thursday, Sept. 4 Washington
Friday, Sept. 5 Washington
Saturday, Sept. 6 Washington
Sunday, Sept. 7 Washington
Tuesday, Sept. 9 Colorado
Wednesday, Sept. 10 Colorado
Thursday, Sept. 11 Colorado
Friday, Sept. 12 at Mets
Saturday, Sept. 13 at Mets
Sunday, Sept. 14 at Mets
Tuesday, Sept. 16 Philadelphia
Wednesday, Sept. 17 Philadelphia
Thursday, Sept. 18 Philadelphia
Friday, Sept. 19 Mets
Saturday, Sept. 20 Mets
Sunday, Sept. 21 Mets
Monday, Sept. 22 at Philadelphia
Tuesday, Sept. 23 at Philadelphia
Wednesday, Sept. 24 at Philadelphia
Friday, Sept. 26 at Houston
Saturday, Sept. 27 at Houston
Sunday, Sept. 28 at Houston

***Exhibition games**

INDIVIDUAL STATS

Final

BATTERS	AVG	SLG	OBP	G	AB	R	H	TB	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB	CS	E
Sammons	.667	1.000	.667	2	3	0	2	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Diaz	.338	.497	.368	135	358	44	121	178	21	0	12	45	16	63	4	0	2
Jones, C.	.337	.604	.425	134	513	108	173	310	42	4	29	102	82	75	5	1	9
RIGHT	.274	.458	.345		201		55	92	12	2	7	28	22	30			
LEFT	.378	.699	.472		312		118	218	30	2	22	74	60	45			
Renteria	.332	.470	.390	124	494	87	164	232	30	1	12	57	46	77	11	2	11
Escobar	.326	.451	.385	94	319	54	104	144	25	0	5	28	27	44	5	3	11
Teixeira	.317	.615	.404	54	208	38	66	128	9	1	17	56	27	46	0	0	4
RIGHT	.342	.553	.405		76		26	42	4	0	4	20	8	17			
LEFT	.303	.652	.404		132		40	86	5	1	13	36	19	29			
Francoeur	.293	.444	.338	162	642	84	188	285	40	0	19	105	42	129	5	2	5
Prado	.288	.339	.323	28	59	5	17	20	3	0	0	2	3	6	0	0	3
Saltalamacchia	.284	.411	.333	47	141	11	40	58	6	0	4	12	10	28	0	0	3
RIGHT	.290	.507	.324		69		20	35	3	0	4	7	4	14			
LEFT	.278	.319	.342		72		20	23	3	0	0	5	6	14			
Johnson	.276	.457	.375	147	521	91	144	238	26	10	16	68	79	117	9	5	14
McCann	.270	.452	.320	139	504	51	136	228	38	0	18	92	35	74	0	1	13
Harris	.270	.392	.349	117	344	56	93	135	20	8	2	32	40	71	17	11	4
Miller	.259	.444	.310	12	27	3	7	12	2	0	1	4	1	5	0	0	0
Jones, A.	.222	.413	.311	154	572	83	127	236	27	2	26	94	70	138	5	2	2
Franco	.222	.289	.321	55	90	8	20	26	3	0	1	16	14	23	2	1	0
ATL	.250	.325	.311	15	40	1	10	13	3	0	0	8	4	10	0	0	0
Thorman	.216	.394	.258	120	287	37	62	113	18	0	11	36	14	70	1	1	6
Pena	.212	.303	.212	16	33	2	7	10	0	0	1	3	0	3	0	1	0
RIGHT	.222	.389	.222		18		4	7	0	0	1	2	0	2			
LEFT	.200	.200	.200		15		3	3	0	0	0	1	0	1			
Orr	.200	.215	.235	57	65	11	13	14	1	0	0	2	3	14	1	0	1
Woodward	.199	.279	.252	92	136	16	27	38	6	1	1	8	10	29	1	0	6
Wilson	.172	.259	.304	24	58	6	10	15	2	0	1	2	8	25	0	0	1
Langerhans	.170	.311	.273	123	206	27	35	64	7	2	6	23	28	79	3	1	1
ATL	.068	.091	.192	20	44	3	3	4	1	0	0	1	6	16	0	1	0
Jones, B.	.158	.211	.190	5	19	0	3	4	1	0	0	4	0	8	0	0	0
ATLANTA	.275	.435	.339	162	5,689	810	1,562	2,472	328	27	176	781	534	1,149	64	30	107
OPPONENTS	.259	.415	.327	162	5,557	733	1,442	2,308	272	39	172	690	537	1,106	98	30	93

Totals include pitchers' hitting.

PINCH HITTERS (AVG-H-HR-RBI) Miller (1.000-1-0-0), Escobar (.375-3-0-0), Prado (.364-4-0-1), Reyes (.333-1-0-0), Diaz (.292-14-0-4), Harris (.267-4-0-0), Orr (.241-7-0-2), Thorman (.233-10-2-5), Franco (.200-1-0-1), McCann (.167-1-0-0), Woodward (.128-5-1-4), Pena (.125-1-0-1), Saltalamacchia (.100-1-0-1), Johnson (.091-1-0-0), Wilson (.000-0-0-1), Jones, C., Renteria, Moylan, Langerhans, James, Davies (.000-0-0-0). TEAM (.213-54-3-20).

PITCHERS (AVG-H-HR-RBI) Hudson (.263-20-0-9), Villarreal (.250-1-0-0), Davies (.192-5-1-4), Reyes (.158-3-0-0), Carlyle (.139-5-0-3), James (.113-6-0-2), Smoltz (.093, 5-0-2), Moylan, Cormier, Lerew, Yates, Redman, Bennett, Mahay (.000-0-0-0). STAFF (.149-45-1-20).

KEY: AVG-Batting average, SLG-Slugging percentage, OBP-One-base percentage, G-Games, AB-At-bats, R-Runs, H-Hits, 2B-Doubles, 3B-Triples, HR-Home runs, RBI-Runs batted in, BB-Walks, SO-Strikeouts, HP-Hit by pitch, SB-Stolen bases; CS-Caught stealing; E-Errors. W-L-Wins-Losses, ERA-Earned run average, OBA-Opponents' batting average, GS-Games started, CG-Complete games, GF-Games finished, SV-Saves, IP-Innings pitched, ER-Earned runs.

PITCHERS	W-L	ERA	OBA	G	GS	CG	GF	SV	IP	H	R	ER	HR	BB	SO
Devine	1-0	1.08	.241	10	0	0	5	0	8.1	7	1	1	0	8	7
Gonzalez	2-0	1.59	.246	18	0	0	5	2	17	15	3	3	0	8	13
Mahay	1-0	2.25	.194	30	0	0	0	0	28	19	8	7	1	16	23
Acosta	1-1	2.28	.165	21	0	0	5	0	23.2	13	6	6	2	14	22
Ring	1-0	2.70	.186	26	0	0	7	0	20	13	8	6	1	17	21
ATL	0-0	0.00	.133	11	0	0	3	0	5	2	0	0	0	3	4
Soriano	3-3	3.00	.181	71	0	0	28	9	72	47	26	24	12	15	70
Smoltz	14-8	3.11	.249	32	32	0	0	0	205.2	196	78	71	18	47	197
Hudson	16-10	3.33	.261	34	34	1	0	0	224.1	221	87	83	10	53	132
Boyer	0-0	3.38	.417	5	0	0	2	0	5.1	10	3	2	0	1	3
Bennett	2-1	3.46	.269	3	2	0	0	0	13	14	5	5	3	3	14
Paronto	3-1	3.57	.307	41	0	0	12	1	40.1	47	20	16	1	19	14
Wickman	3-4	3.58	.263	57	0	0	40	20	50.1	54	24	20	4	21	37
ATL	3-3	3.92	.267	49	0	0	39	20	43.2	48	22	19	4	20	35
McBride	1-0	3.60	.237	18	0	0	4	0	15	14	9	6	1	15	17
James	11-10	4.24	.265	30	30	0	0	0	161.1	164	77	76	32	58	116
Villarreal	2-2	4.24	.260	51	0	0	11	1	76.1	75	40	36	6	32	58
Dotel	0-0	4.70	.172	9	0	0	3	0	7.2	5	5	4	1	1	12
Colyer	0-1	4.91	.500	7	0	0	1	0	3.2	9	2	2	1	4	4
Ascanio	1-1	5.06	.254	13	0	0	6	0	16	17	11	9	3	6	13
Yates	2-3	5.18	.251	75	0	0	14	2	66	64	44	38	6	31	69
Carlyle	8-7	5.21	.284	22	20	0	1	0	107	117	67	62	19	32	74
Davies	4-8	5.76	.272	17	17	0	0	0	86	92	61	55	12	44	59
Reyes	2-2	6.22	.286	11	10	0	0	0	50.2	55	39	35	9	30	27
Ledezma	0-2	6.85	.320	21	1	0	8	0	23.2	32	21	18	3	12	23
ATL	0-2	7.71	.300	12	0	0	4	0	9.1	12	10	8	1	4	7
Cormier	2-6	7.09	.303	10	9	0	1	0	45.2	56	38	36	16	22	27
Redman	2-4	7.62	.331	11	8	0	0	0	41.1	59	37	35	6	17	27
ATL	0-4	11.63	.380	6	5	0	0	0	21.2	38	29	28	4	11	13
Lerew	0-2	7.71	.298	3	3	0	0	0	11.2	14	10	10	4	7	9
Barry	0-0	22.50	.500	1	0	0	1	0	2	6	5	5	0	2	4
ATLANTA	84-78	4.11	.259	162	162	1	161	36	1,456.1	1,442	733	665	172	537	1,106
OPPONENTS	78-84	4.64	.275	162	162	2	160	44	1,453	1,562	810	749	176	534	1,149

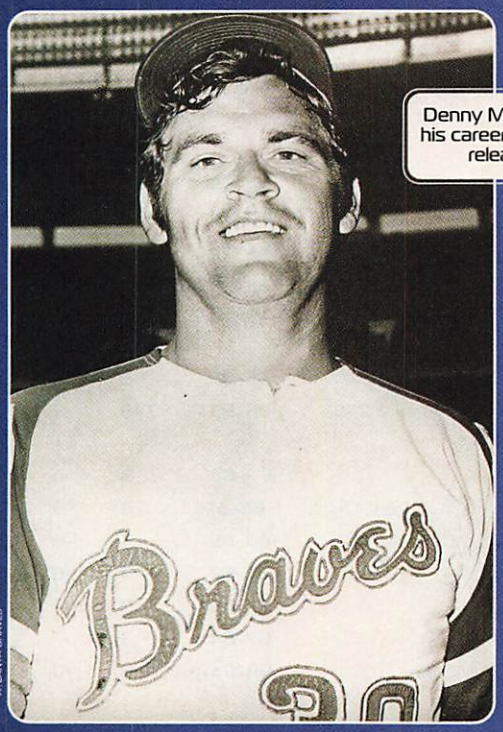
GAME BY GAME

GAME	DATE	OPP.	H/A	W-L	SCORE	W/L PITCHER	ATL HRs	REC.	POS.	GB
1	4/2	PHI	A	W	5-3 (10)	Wickman (1-0)	McCann (1), Renteria 2 (2)	1-0	T-1	--
2	4/4	PHI	A	W	3-2 (11)	McBride (1-0)	McCann (2), Thorman (1)	2-0	2	- 1/2
3	4/5	PHI	A	W	8-4	James (1-0)	Johnson (1)	3-0	T-1	--
4	4/6	NYM	H	L	1-11	Redman (0-1)	Francoeur (1)	3-1	2	-1
5	4/7	NYM	H	W	5-3	Smoltz (1-0)	Diaz (1)	4-1	T-1	--
6	4/8	NYM	H	W	3-2	Soriano (1-0)	Johnson (2)	5-1	1	--
7	4/10	WAS	H	W	8-0	Hudson (1-0)	A. Jones (1), Francoeur (2)	6-1	1	+1
8	4/11	WAS	H	W	8-3	James (2-0)	A. Jones (2), C. Jones (1)	7-1	1	+2
9	4/12	WAS	H	L	0-2	Smoltz (1-1)	--	7-2	1	+1
10	4/13	FLA	H	L	4-11	Redman (0-2)	C. Jones (2), Pena (1)	7-3	T-1	--
11	4/15	FLA	H	W	8-4	Hudson (2-0)	C. Jones (3), A. Jones (3)	8-3	1	+1
12	4/16	WAS	A	L	1-5	James (2-1)	--	8-4	1	+1/2
13	4/17	WAS	A	W	6-4	Smoltz (2-1)	C. Jones (4)	9-4	1	+1/2
14	4/18	CHI	H	W	8-6	Villarreal (1-0)	Francoeur (3), Thorman (2)	1	+1/2	
15	4/19	CHI	H	L	0-3	Redman (0-3)	--	10-5	2	-1/2
16	4/20	NYM	A	W	7-3	Hudson (3-0)	C. Jones (5)	11-5	1	+1/2
17	4/21	NYM	A	L	2-7	James (2-2)	--	11-6	2	-1/2
18	4/22	NYM	A	W	9-6	Yates (1-0)	Johnson 2 (4), Renteria (3)	12-6	1	+1/2
19	4/23	FLA	A	L	7-8	Davies (0-1)	Francoeur (4), C. Jones (6)	12-7	2	-1/2
20	4/24	FLA	A	W	11-6	Moylan (1-0)	--	13-7	2	-1/2
21	4/25	FLA	A	L	3-4	Wickman (1-1)	Johnson (5), C. Jones (7), Diaz (2)	13-8	2	-1/2
22	4/27	COL	A	W	9-7	James (3-2)	A. Jones (4), Wilson (1)	14-8	1	+1/2
23	4/28	COL	A	W	6-2	Smoltz (3-1)	Francoeur (5), Renteria (4)	15-8	1	+1/2
24	4/29	COL	A	L	7-9 (11)	Colyer (0-1)	Thorman (3)	15-9	2	-1/2
25	4/30	PHI	H	W	5-2	Gonzalez (1-0)	C. Jones (8), A. Jones (5)	16-9	1	+1/2
26	5/1	PHI	H	L	4-6	Redman (0-4)	C. Jones 2 (10)	16-10	1	+1/2
27	5/2	PHI	H	W	4-3	Paronto (1-0)	--	17-10	1	+1/2
28	5/4	LAD	H	W	4-0	Smoltz (4-1)	--	18-10	T-1	--
29	5/5	LAD	H	L	3-6	Hudson (3-1)	--	18-11	2	-1
30	5/6	LAD	H	W	6-4	Paronto (2-0)	--	19-11	T-1	--
31	5/7	SD	H	L	2-4	James (3-3)	--	19-12	T-1	--
32	5/8	SD	H	W	3-2	Gonzalez (2-0)	--	20-12	T-1	--
33	5/9	SD	H	W	3-2	Smoltz (5-1)	--	21-12	T-1	--
34	5/10	SD	H	W	5-3	Hudson (4-1)	--	22-12	1	+1/2
35	5/11	PIT	A	W	4-1	Davies (1-1)	A. Jones (6), Francoeur (6)	23-12	1	+1/2
36	5/12	PIT	A	W	9-2	James (4-3)	Thorman 2 (5)	24-12	1	+1 1/2
37	5/13	PIT	A	L	2-13	Lerew (0-1)	--	24-13	1	+1/2
38	5/14	WAS	A	L	1-2	Smoltz (5-2)	McCann (3)	24-14	2	-1/2
39	5/15	WAS	A	W	6-2	Hudson (5-1)	Renteria 2 (6)	25-14	1	+1/2
40	5/16	WAS	A	L	4-6	Davies (1-2)	--	25-15	2	-1/2
41	5/17	WAS	A	L	3-4	Paronto (2-1)	C. Jones (11)	25-16	2	-1 1/2
42	(1 of 2) 5/19	BOS	A	L	3-13	Lerew (0-2)	Francoeur (7)	25-17	2	-2 1/2
43	(2 of 2) 5/19	BOS	A	W	14-0	Smoltz (6-2)	C. Jones (12), Johnson (6), Diaz (3)	26-17	2	-2 1/2
44	5/20	BOS	A	L	3-6	Hudson (5-2)	--	26-18	2	-2 1/2
45	5/22	NYM	H	W	8-1	Davies (2-2)	Thorman (6), Davies (1)	27-18	2	-1 1/2
46	5/23	NYM	H	L	0-3	James (4-4)	--	27-19	2	-2 1/2
47	5/24	NYM	H	W	2-1	Smoltz (7-2)	Diaz (4)	28-19	2	-1 1/2
48	5/25	PHI	H	L	3-8	Hudson (5-3)	--	28-20	2	-2 1/2
49	5/26	PHI	H	L	4-6	Carlyle (0-1)	Renteria (7)	28-21	2	-3 1/2
50	5/27	PHI	H	L	6-13	Davies (2-3)	Saltalamacchia (1), A. Jones (7)	28-22	2	-4 1/2
51	5/28	MIL	A	W	2-1	James (5-4)	A. Jones (8)	29-22	2	-4
52	5/29	MIL	A	L	4-5	Moylan (1-1)	Harris (1)	29-23	2	-5
53	5/30	MIL	A	W	9-3	Hudson (6-3)	Johnson (7)	30-23	2	-4
54	6/1	CHI	A	W	8-5	Davies (3-3)	--	31-23	2	-3 1/2
55	6/2	CHI	A	W	5-3	Yates (2-0)	A. Jones (9)	32-23	2	-3 1/2
56	6/3	CHI	A	L	1-10	Cormier (0-1)	--	32-24	2	-3 1/2
57	6/4	FLA	H	L	4-6	Hudson (6-4)	Escobar (1), Renteria (8)	32-25	2	-4
58	(1 of 2) 6/5	FLA	H	W	3-1	Carlyle (1-1)	Saltalamacchia (2), Woodward (1)	33-25	2	-3 1/2
59	(2 of 2) 6/5	FLA	H	L	1-5	Smoltz (7-3)	--	33-26	2	-3 1/2
60	6/6	FLA	H	L	4-7	Davies (3-4)	--	33-27	2	-3 1/2
61	6/7	CHI	H	L	1-2	James (5-5)	A. Jones (10)	33-28	2	-3 1/2
62	6/8	CHI	H	L	1-9	Cormier (0-2)	--	33-29	2	-4 1/2
63	6/9	CHI	H	W	9-5	Moylan (2-1)	A. Jones (11), Renteria (9)	34-29	2	-3 1/2
64	6/10	CHI	H	W	5-4	Paronto (3-1)	Johnson (8)	35-29	2	-2 1/2
65	6/12	MIN	A	L	3-7	Davies (3-5)	Francoeur (8), Thorman (7)	35-30	2	-2
66	6/13	MIN	A	L	0-6	James (5-6)	--	35-31	2	-2

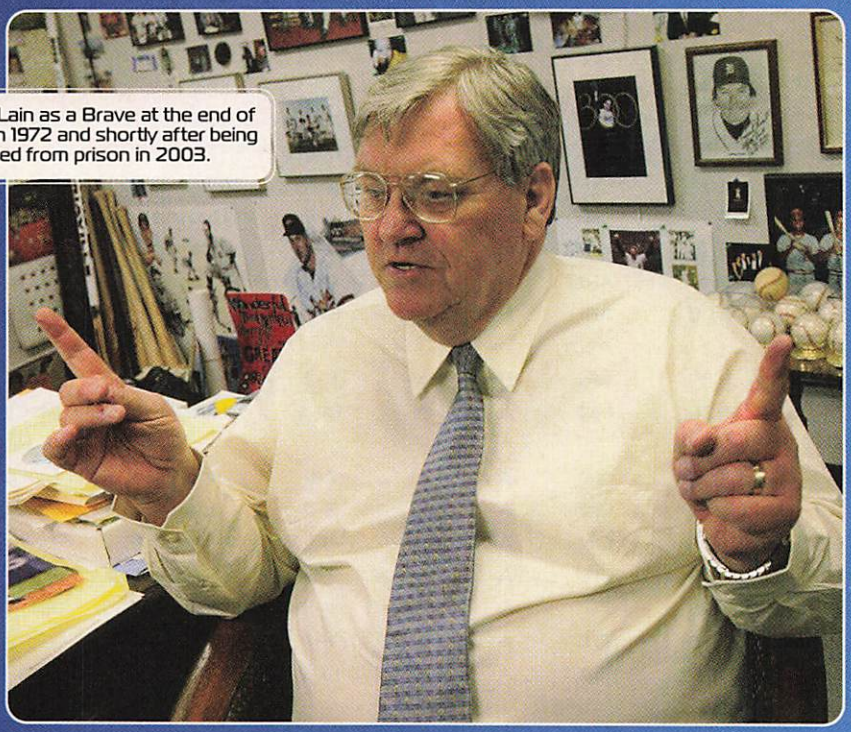
GAME BY GAME

GAME	DATE	OPP.	H/A	W-L	SCORE	W/L PITCHER	ATL HRs	REC.	POS.	GB
67	6/14	MIN	A	L	2-3	Wickman (1-2)	McCann (4)	35-32	3	-2 1/2
68	6/15	CLE	A	W	5-4	Soriano (2-0)	--	36-32	2	-2 1/2
69	6/16	CLE	A	W	6-2	Smoltz (8-3)	Renteria (10)	37-32	2	-1 1/2
70	6/17	CLE	A	L	2-5	Davies (3-6)	Thorman (8)	37-33	2	1 1/2
71	6/18	BOS	H	W	9-4	James (6-6)	McCann (5), Thorman (9)	38-33	2	-1 1/2
72	6/19	BOS	H	L	0-4	Hudson (6-5)	--	38-34	2	-1 1/2
73	6/20	BOS	H	L	0-11	Carlyle (1-2)	--	38-35	2	-1 1/2
74	6/22	DET	H	L	0-5	Smoltz (8-4)	--	38-36	3	-2 1/2
75	6/23	DET	H	L	1-2	Davies (3-7)	C. Jones (13)	38-37	3	-3 1/2
76	6/24	DET	H	L	0-5	James (6-7)	--	38-38	3	-4 1/2
77	6/25	WAS	H	W	4-1	Hudson (7-5)	McCann (6)	39-38	3	-4 1/2
78	6/26	WAS	H	W	6-2	Carlyle (2-2)	Saltalamacchia 2 (4), A. Jones (12)	40-38	3	-3 1/2
79	6/27	WAS	H	W	13-0	Smoltz (9-4)	McCann (7)	41-38	3	-3 1/2
80	6/29	FLA	A	W	12-3	James (7-7)	--	42-38	2	-4
81	6/30	FLA	A	W	6-5	Hudson (8-5)	--	43-38	2	-4
82	7/1	FLA	A	L	5-6 (10)	Soriano (2-1)	A. Jones (13)	43-39	2	4
83	7/2	LAD	A	L	2-8	Smoltz (9-5)	--	43-40	2	-4
84	7/3	LAD	A	L	6-7	Ledezma (3-2)	McCann (8)	43-41	2	-4
85	7/4	LAD	A	W	5-2	James (8-7)	A. Jones (14)	44-41	2	-3
86	7/5	LAD	A	W	8-6	Moylan (3-1)	Francoeur (9), C. Jones 2 (15)	45-41	2	-3
87	7/6	SD	A	W	7-4	Carlyle (3-2)	A. Jones (15)	46-41	2	-2
88	7/7	SD	A	L	5-8	Yates (2-1)	Francoeur (10)	46-42	2	-3
89	7/8	SD	A	W	5-4	Davies (4-7)	McCann (9), Johnson (9)	47-42	2	-2
90	7/13	PIT	H	W	9-1	Hudson (9-5)	McCann 2 (11), A. Jones (16)	48-42	2	-1 1/2
91	7/14	PIT	H	W	5-4	Wickman (2-2)	A. Jones (17)	49-42	2	-1 1/2
92	7/15	PIT	H	W	5-1	Carlyle (4-2)	--	50-42	2	-1 1/2
93	7/16	CIN	H	L	3-10	Davies (4-8)	--	50-43	2	-1 1/2
94	7/17	CIN	H	L	5-6	Reyes (0-1)	A. Jones (18)	50-44	2	-2 1/2
95	7/18	CIN	H	L	4-5 (15)	Ascanio (0-1)	--	50-45	2	-2 1/2
96	7/19	STL	H	W	10-1	Hudson (10-5)	A. Jones (19), Diaz (5)	51-45	2	-2 1/2
97	7/20	STL	H	L	2-4	Soriano (2-2)	--	51-46	2	-3 1/2
98	7/21	STL	H	W	14-6	Carlyle (5-2)	C. Jones (16)	52-46	2	-2 1/2
99	7/22	STL	H	L	2-7 (10)	Yates (2-2)	Johnson (10)	52-47	2	-3 1/2
100	7/23	SF	A	W	4-2	Smoltz (10-5)	--	53-47	2	-3
101	7/24	SF	A	W	7-5 (13)	Moylan (4-1)	C. Jones (17)	54-47	2	-3
102	7/25	SF	A	L	1-2	James (8-8)	--	54-48	2	-4
103	7/26	SF	A	L	2-4	Carlyle (5-3)	Francoeur (11)	54-49	2	-4
104	7/27	ARI	A	L	7-8 (11)	Ledezma (3-3)	--	54-50	3	-4
105	7/28	ARI	A	L	3-4 (10)	Yates (2-3)	--	54-51	3	-4 1/2
106	7/29	ARI	A	W	14-0	Hudson (11-5)	A. Jones (20), Thorman (10)	55-51	3	-4 1/2
107	7/31	HOU	H	W	12-4	James (9-8)	McCann (12), Johnson 2 (12), Francoeur (12)	56-51	3	-3 1/2
108	8/1	HOU	H	W	12-3	Carlyle (6-3)	Renteria (11), Teixeira (1)	57-51	2	-3 1/2
109	8/2	HOU	H	L	11-12 (14)	Villarreal (1-1)	A. Jones (21), Teixeira (2), Diaz (6)	57-52	3	-4 1/2
110	8/3	COL	H	L	2-9	Smoltz (10-6)	Teixeira (3)	57-53	3	5 1/2
111	8/4	COL	H	W	6-4	Hudson (12-5)	Diaz (7)	58-53	2	-4 1/2
112	8/5	COL	H	W	6-5 (10)	Villarreal (2-1)	C. Jones (18)	59-53	2	-4 1/2
113	8/7	NYM	A	W	7-3	Carlyle (7-3)	Diaz (8), Francoeur (13)	60-53	2	-3 1/2
114	8/8	NYM	A	L	3-4	Soriano (2-3)	--	60-54	3	-4 1/2
115	8/9	NYM	A	W	7-6	Hudson (13-5)	C. Jones (19), Teixeira (4)	61-54	2	-3 1/2
116	8/10	PHI	A	L	4-5	Moylan (4-2)	Diaz (9)	61-55	3	-3 1/2
117	8/11	PHI	A	W	7-5	Mahay (1-0)	Johnson (13), Francoeur (14)	62-55	2	-2 1/2
118	8/12	PHI	A	L	3-5	Carlyle (7-4)	--	62-56	3	-3 1/2

GAME	DATE	OPP.	H/A	W-L	SCORE	W/L PITCHER	ATL HRs	REC.	POS.	GB
119	8/14	SF	H	W	5-4	Wickman (3-2)	Teixeira (5)	63-56	3	-3 1/2
120	8/15	SF	H	W	6-3	Hudson (14-5)	--	64-56	2	-3 1/2
121	8/16	SF	H	L	3-9	James (9-9)	--	64-57	3	-3 1/2
122	8/17	ARI	H	L	0-4	Cormier (0-3)	--	64-58	3	-4 1/2
123	8/18	ARI	H	L	6-12	Carlyle (7-5)	C. Jones (20), Francoeur 2 (16), A. Jones (22)	64-59	3	-5 1/2
124	8/19	ARI	H	W	6-2	Smoltz (11-6)	Teixeira 2 (7), Escobar (2)	65-59	3	-5 1/2
125	8/20	CIN	A	W	14-4	Hudson (15-5)	McCann (13), Teixeira 2 (9), A. Jones (23)	66-59	T-2	-5
126	8/21	CIN	A	L	7-8	Moylan (4-3)	McCann (14)	66-60	3	-6
127	8/22	CIN	A	L	2-4	Cormier (0-4)	McCann (15), A. Jones (24)	66-61	3	-6
128	8/23	CIN	A	L	7-9 (12)	Wickman (3-3)	Teixeira (10), C. Jones (21)	66-62	3	-6
129	8/24	STL	A	W	7-2	Smoltz (12-6)	--	67-62	3	-6
130	8/25	STL	A	L	4-5	Hudson (15-6)	Johnson (14)	67-63	3	-7
131	8/26	STL	A	L	1-4	Reyes (0-2)	--	67-64	3	-7
132	8/27	FLA	A	W	13-2	Cormier (1-4)	Diaz (10), McCann (16), Johnson (15)	68-64	3	-6
133	8/28	FLA	A	L	3-4 (11)	Villarreal (2-2)	McCann (17), C. Jones (22)	68-65	3	-6
134	8/29	FLA	A	W	7-4	Carlyle (8-5)	Diaz 2 (12), Escobar (3)	69-65	3	-5
135	8/ 31	NYM	H	L	1-7	Hudson (15-7)	--	69-66	3	-5 1/2
136	9/1	NYM	H	L	1-5	James (9-10)	--	69-67	3	-6 1/2
137	9/2	NYM	H	L	2-3	Smoltz (12-7)	--	69-68	3	-7 1/2
138	9/3	PHI	H	W	5-1	Cormier (2-4)	--	70-68	3	-7 1/2
139	9/4	PHI	H	L	2-5	Carlyle (8-6)	C. Jones (23)	70-69	3	-8 1/2
140	9/5	PHI	H	W	9-8	Soriano (3-3)	Harris (2)	71-69	3	-7 1/2
141	9/7	WAS	H	W	7-1	Smoltz (13-7)	C. Jones (24)	72-69	3	-7 1/2
142	9/8	WAS	H	W	9-2	James (10-10)	Francoeur (17), Escobar (4)	73-69	3	-7 1/2
143	9/9	WAS	H	L	4-7	Cormier (2-5)	C. Jones (25), Teixeira (11)	73-70	3	-8 1/2
144	9/10	NYM	A	L	2-3	Hudson (15-8)	McCann (18)	73-71	3	-9 1/2
145	9/11	NYM	A	W	13-5	Moylan (5-3)	Escobar (5), Teixeira (12)	74-71	3	-8 1/2
146	9/12	NYM	A	L	3-4	Acosta (0-1)	--	74-72	3	-9 1/2
147	9/14	WAS	A	W	8-5 (13)	Ascanio (1-1)	--	75-72	3	-8 1/2
148	9/15	WAS	A	L	4-7	Cormier (2-6)	C. Jones (26), Miller (1)	75-73	3	-8 1/2
149	9/16	WAS	A	W	3-0	Hudson (16-8)	Johnson (16)	76-73	3	-7 1/2
150	9/17	FLA	H	W	11-6	Smoltz (14-7)	A. Jones (25)	77-73	3	-6 1/2
151	9/18	FLA	H	W	4-3	Reyes (1-2)	--	78-73	3	-5 1/2
152	9/19	FLA	H	W	5-1	James (11-10)	Renteria (12), Teixeira (13), A. Jones (26)	79-73	3	-5 1/2
153	9/20	MIL	H	W	3-1	Bennett (1-0)	--	80-73	3	-4 1/2
154	9/21	MIL	H	L	1-4	Hudson (16-9)	Teixeira (14)	80-74	3	-5 1/2
155	9/22	MIL	H	W	4-3 (11)	Devine (1-0)	C. Jones (27), Thorman (1)	81-74	3	-5 1/2
156	9/23	MIL	H	W	7-4	Acosta (1-1)	--	82-74	3	-5 1/2
157	9/25	PHI	A	W	10-6	Bennett (2-0)	Teixeira (15), C. Jones (28)	83-74	3	-4
158	9/26	PHI	A	L	2-5	Hudson (16-10)	Teixeira (16)	83-75	3	-4
159	9/27	PHI	A	L	4-6	Smoltz (14-8)	C. Jones (29), Teixeira (17), Francoeur (18)	83-76	3	-4
160	9/28	HOU	A	W	7-2	Reyes (2-2)	Francoeur (19)	84-76	3	-4
161	9/29	HOU	A	L	2-3	Bennett (2-1)	--	84-77	3	-4
162	9/30	HOU	A	L	0-3	Carlyle (8-7)	--	84-78	3	-5



ATLANTA BRAVES



SUSAN TUSH/DETROIT FREE PRESS

Denny McLain as a Brave at the end of his career in 1972 and shortly after being released from prison in 2003.

SHOOTING STAR

LAST 30-GAME WINNER McLAIN STILL REMEMBERS HUGE OVATION AT ATLANTA STADIUM

BY BRIAN KNAPP

HEROES & HISTORY

THE LIFE OF DENNY MCLAIN has taken more twists and turns than a Hitchcock movie. The last major league pitcher to win 30 games in a season (31 for Detroit in 1968), he's been on a roller coaster ride through unimaginable highs and depressing lows that includes being named both the American League's MVP and Cy Young winner in '68, two stints in federal prison, and the tragic death of his first-born child.

Best remembered for the eight years he spent in a Detroit Tigers uniform, McLain actually threw his final big league pitch for the Braves. His once dependable right arm in decline, McLain made his debut with Atlanta on July 4, 1972, following his trade from the Oakland Athletics for Orlando Cepeda. A sold-out crowd of 50,597 descended on what then was known as just Atlanta Stadium for game two of a doubleheader against the Cubs of Billy Williams and Ron Santo. McLain's reputation preceded him.

"We had a full house," he said. "When I walked out to warm up, there was this huge roar. I turned around to the bullpen coach and asked, 'What's that all about?' He said, 'Big Boy, that's for you.' It was one of the greatest moments of my life."

McLain scattered nine hits over seven innings in a game ended by rain before the Cubs batted in the eighth, the scored tied, 3-3. Five days later, the righthander lasted only two and two-thirds innings against the Pirates, as home runs from future Hall-of-Famer Willie Stargell and seven-time All-Star Al Oliver chased him from the mound.

McLain failed to recapture his past glory with the Braves, as the team limped to a fourth-place finish under two managers - Luman Harris and Eddie Mathews.

"We weren't very good," he said.

McLain appeared in 15 games (eight starts) with Atlanta in 1972 (3-5, 6.50), only to be released the following spring, and he never pitched in the majors again. His rotator cuff, worn down by nearly 2,000 innings, was shredded, and, at age 28, he was out of a job, finishing with a 131-91 lifetime record and a 3.39 ERA.

"I hurt it bad when I was in Detroit," McLain said. "They didn't have the operation they have now. Back in those days, they cut you wide open, and they'd tell you if you ever broke it again, you wouldn't be able to wipe your butt. I chose not to take the operation."

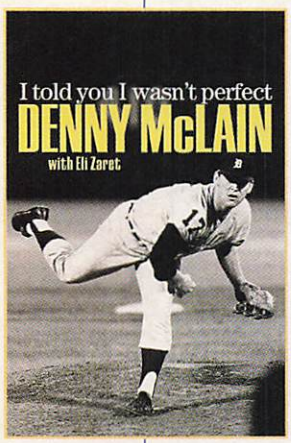
While teams received diminishing returns at the tail end of McLain's career, few pitchers can match the consecutive seasons he pieced together in Detroit in the late 1960s. He won back-to-back AL Cy Young Awards (1968-69) and reached 100 wins by the

age of 25. In 1968, he led the league in wins (31) and innings (336), struck out 280, and posted a 1.86 earned run average en route to being named the AL MVP.

"Everything went right," McLain said. "What's funny is I didn't get a decision the first three games I pitched. I played for the best baseball team ever assembled. They caught the groundballs, hit the cutoff man, and knew how to get a run when you needed a run."

The Tigers won 103 games and advanced to the 1968 World Series against St. Louis. After bowing to the incomparable Bob Gibson in Games 1 and 4, McLain, with his team on the brink of elimination, worked a complete-game masterpiece on two days' rest in Game 6, evening the series 3-3, with a 13-1 victory.

"Nothing's bigger or better than pitching in the World Series," McLain said. "That sixth game was my salvation, to say the least."



As history recalls, the Tigers went on to topple the Cardinals – and Gibson – 4-1 behind Mickey Lolich's Game 7 heroics. The championship came at a perfect time for Detroit, which had endured one of the worst riots in American history a summer earlier. The team united the city through its passion for baseball. Wounds healed slowly.

The shadow of McLain's accomplishments grows with each passing year. Only Bob Welch (27 wins for Oakland in 1990) and Steve Carlton (27 for the 1972 Phillies) have flirted with the 30-win mark since. The last pitcher before McLain to win 30 was Dizzy Dean in 1934.

"I wish I had realized the importance of it years ago," McLain said. "It becomes a bigger event in my life as I see more and more guys who can't win 20. I played in the best era of talent. I don't think the game will ever be played as well as it was back then."

Life after baseball hardened McLain, personally and professionally. Signs of trouble arose during his career. He was twice suspended by Commissioner Bowie Kuhn – first for his suspected ties to gambling and organized crime and again for carrying a gun onto a team flight. In 1985, he was convicted of racketeering, loan sharking and conspiracy to distribute cocaine. His refusal to testify against the mafia resulted in a 23-year prison sentence.

"I don't know if prison changes you," McLain said. "You have to get permission to do everything. While I was there, I felt pretty close to the end. You're in the middle of 250 people, and you're still alone. No one cares about you."

Though he won a reversal after 29 months behind bars, McLain's image was forever tarnished, the young Chicagoan with big league dreams and the arm to match long forgotten. His weight ballooned to more than 300 pounds, but it was only the beginning of the downward spiral for the former superstar and his family.

Tragedy crossed McLain and his wife, Sharon, in 1992 when their 26-year-old daughter, Kristin, was killed in a car accident with an 18-wheeler a few miles from their home.

"It's the absolute worst thing that can happen to a parent," McLain said. "It's something that's still with us today. For 10 years, I was a basket case; I couldn't make a decision. We still go out to the cemetery. You hear someone say something... you see someone who looks like her. There's a memory every day."

McLain was imprisoned again in 1996 after he was convicted of stealing $2.5 million from the pension fund of a failed meat packing plant he purchased. He spent another six years in prison, and his wife, fed up with the drama, filed for divorce. McLain had never been more alone.

"When I went to jail, she decided she'd had enough," McLain said. "I did everything I could to get her back."

The two remarried when McLain was released from prison and slowly began putting the pieces of their life back in place. Their three surviving children brought them seven grandkids. The March release of his book, "I Told You I Wasn't Perfect," co-written by Eli Zaret, helped shed light on his triumphs and failures (cover above).

At 63 and in the middle of an extended book tour, McLain remains quick-witted and opinionated, on everything from the current state of baseball to the war in Iraq.

"I'm just an old pain-in-the-butt," he said, a streak of defiance in his voice. "The next time I hear someone say something about the golden years, I'm going to slap them. There's nothing golden about the golden years."

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ALUMNI NOTES

Phil Niekro (RHP, 1964-83, '87) and fellow Hall of Famers Ferguson Jenkins, Robin Roberts and Ozzie Smith, discussed their careers in a Voices of the Game event at the Cooperstown shrine Oct. 6. He also participated in the Hall of Fame Fantasy Camp Oct. 5-10. Niekro's nephew, Lance, a first baseman in the Giants organization, provided coaching support at the camp. Lance may follow in the footsteps of his uncle and his late father, **Joe Niekro** (RHP, 1973-74) in becoming a knuckleball pitcher. He worked two-thirds of an inning for the Triple-A Fresno Grizzlies Aug. 18, allowing two runs and three hits. "If he wants to go that route, I'll be glad to teach him everything I know," Phil told ChopTalk.

NATIONAL BASEBALL HALL OF FAME

Phil Niekro and his nephew, Lance Niekro, at Doubleday Field in Cooperstown, perhaps discussing the finer points of the knuckleball.

Don Nottebart (RHP, 1960-62), who pitched the first no-hitter in Houston franchise history, died Oct. 4 in Cypress, Tex., at age 71. He reportedly had been in decline since suffering a recent stroke. Nottebart, who won nine games and saved six for the Milwaukee Braves, threw a no-hitter for the Houston Colt 45s against the Phillies on May 17, 1963, at Colt Stadium. The final out was made by former Brave **Wes Covington** (OF, 1956-61), who flied to left field where **Al Spangler** (OF, 1959-61), yet another former Brave, made the catch. Houston won, 4-1, with the Phillies scoring an unearned run in the fifth on a two-base error, a sacrifice bunt and a sacrifice fly.

Tom Glavine (LHP, 1987-2002) declined to exercise his contract option with the Mets and thus became eligible for free agency. He said his decision doesn't necessarily mean he won't sign with the Mets again, but he hasn't said if he even intends to pitch next season. Glavine, who turns 42 in March, joined the 300-win club in 2007 and ended the year with a 13-8 record and 303 career victories. In his final three starts, he lasted a total of just 11 1/3 innings and gave up 17 runs.

Baltimore released **Jaret Wright** (RHP, 2003-04) on Oct. 1.

John Sullivan, a Braves coach under Bobby Cox in 1980-81, died Sept. 20 at age 86 at his home in Chicago.

Milwaukee's **Johnny Estrada** (C, 2003-05) had arthroscopic knee surgery Oct. 4 to repair a torn meniscus in his left knee, and he also had a bone spur removed from his right elbow. He is expected to be fully recovered for next season.

According to news reports, Baltimore's **Danys Baez** (RHP, 2006) will have elbow ligament replacement surgery and miss the 2008 season.

The White Sox signed manager **Ozzie Guillen** (INF, 1998-99) to a long-term contract extension through 2012.

Hank Aaron (OF/1B, 1954-74) and his wife, Billye, attended the opening of the New York City Opera's fall season and the New York premiere of "Margaret Garner" Sept. 18. The Aarons' evening began with dinner on the Grand Promenade of the New York State Theater with librettist Toni Morrison and composer Richard Danielpour. Following the performance, there was a champagne toast with the cast and creative team.

Detroit's **Gary Sheffield** (OF, 2002-03) had shoulder surgery Oct. 8 for removal of bone chips, and it was discovered he also had a torn labrum, which was repaired.

BIRTHDAYS

NOVEMBER

1ST	CHICO RUIZ (56)
2ND	GEORGE ESTOCK (83) RON REED (65) TOM PACIOREK (61) **YUNEL ESCOBAR (25)**
3RD	GARRY HILL (61)
4TH	TITO FRANCONA (74)
5TH	CRAIG MCMURTRY (48) JAVY LOPEZ (37)
6TH	BOB ADDIS (82) DON WENGERT (38) JUSTIN SPEIER (34) ADAM LAROCHE (28)
7TH	CLARENCE JONES (66) RUSS SPRINGER (39) TRAVIS SMITH (35)
8TH	DWIGHT SMITH (44) JEFF BLAUSER (42)
9TH	BOB GIBSON (72) DION JAMES (45) **CHUCK JAMES (26)**
10TH	GENE CONLEY (77) BILL SOUTHWORTH (62) ANDRES THOMAS (44) KEITH LOCKHART (43) MICAH BOWIE (33)
11TH	ROBERTO HERNANDEZ (43)
12TH	JODY DAVIS (51)
13TH	GENE GARBER (60) DAN PETRY (49)
15TH	NORMIE ROY (79) JACK SMITH (72) RICK LUECKEN (47) PEDRO BORBON (40) KEVIN GRYBOSKI (34)
16TH	FRANK BOLLING (76) DREW DENSON (42)
17TH	DAN OSINSKI (74) AUBREY GATEWOOD (69) ELI MARRERO (34)
18TH	GARY SHEFFIELD (39)
19TH	JOE MORGAN (77) TED TURNER (69)
20TH	JAY RITCHIE (71) HERMAN STARRETTE (69) DUANE THEISS (54) KEVIN LOMON (36) J.D. DREW (32) **JO-JO REYES (23)**
21ST	MARK EICHHORN (47)
22ND	WADE BLASINGAME (64) RICK MATULA (54) **OSCAR VILLARREAL (26)**
23RD	FRANK TEPEDINO (60) BROOK JACOBY (48) AARON SMALL (36)
24TH	DAMIAN MOSS (31) HORACIO RAMIREZ (28)
25TH	MARK WHITEN (41) **OCTAVIO DOTEL (34)**
26TH	JAY HOWELL (52) BOB WALK (51)
27TH	KEN RAY (33)
28TH	WALT WEISS (44) JOHN BURKETT (43) ADAM BERNERO (31)
30TH	JUAN BERENGUER (53) STEVE SHIELDS (49) CRAIG WILSON (31)

ChopTalk
THE OFFICIAL MONTHLY MAGAZINE OF THE ATLANTA BRAVES

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HEAD SCRATCHING

READER SUSAN POHLMAN of Florence, S.C., checked in with this comment on the Braves' third-place finish: "Tell the Braves that I am not mad they did not make the playoffs, but just sad. I will always remain a Braves fan, because I love them."

I think that goes for all of us. We had 14 straight division titles - more than any fans could expect. We want more, and surely there will be more. But perhaps the odds and the baseball gods are catching up to us.

If you look at this team's roster and at the statistical breakdown of the season (pages 39-39, 41), it is difficult to understand why the Braves didn't make the post-season - especially in light of the fact that the team ERA wound up third-best in the league.

The Braves actually out-pitched Arizona, who made the NLCS. Barely, but still...

And they out-hit the Diamondbacks from Atlanta to Phoenix. The Snakes were last in the NL in team batting average and 14th out of 16 in runs scored.

The D-backs hit a lot less than Atlanta, didn't pitch any better, and still won six more games than the Braves.

This is just one example. Compare the Braves statistically to any of the other NL playoff teams, and the results are similar.

Yes, we're sad... and just a little perplexed, because the roster looked stronger than the outcome. Such is baseball. You can be sure the fans of a few other teams are scratching their heads, too.

What makes this all so intriguing, however, is Mark Teixeira. No, the team's record did not show significant improvement after he entered the lineup Aug. 1. But imagine the possibilities with him batting fourth for a full season...

Had Teixeira been with the Braves since the start of 2007, I believe he would have set a franchise RBI record. And that record has stood since Hall of Famer Hugh Duffy drove in 145 runs in 1894 when he also set the all-time major league season batting average record of .440!

Teixeira will not break Duffy's batting average record next year, but given a similar makeup to the Braves roster and reasonably good health to the starting lineup, he will break Duffy's RBI record.

Too much of a stretch?

Absolutely not!

Remember, Teixeira drove in 144 runs in 2005 with the Rangers, setting the all-time record for a switch-hitter. It's not a stretch at all.

Which brings us to Andruw Jones, who batted cleanup for four months before Teixeira's arrival.

We come to praise Andruw, not to bury him. There can be no trivializing his immense contributions to the franchise over the past 11-plus years. If he's not the greatest-fielding centerfielder of all-time, he's at least in the running. He also owns the franchise season home run record (51 in 2005).

Nevertheless, his inconsistencies at bat are nearly as legendary as his Gold Glove fielding. Not only did he hit just .222 this year, but he's averaged only .257 over the last seven seasons - since hitting a career-high .303 in 2000 - and just .252 over the last four seasons.

Stats can be twisted and turned in a lot of different directions - and we come to praise Andruw, not to bury him... But there's no way an organization intent on trying to win championships can invest $20 million per year for several years in such an erratic hitter.

Decisions have to be made, and financial considerations are a major factor in those decisions, as is what impact such a contract would do to the overall balance of the roster and its ability to win games.

Remember, $20 million is nearly 40 percent of the entire payroll of either Colorado or Arizona, who spent a little over $50 million each to reach the NLCS.

So, we thank Andruw for all he did for the Braves and wish him well. And we applaud Schuerholz's decision and look ahead to an even better season in 2008.

THIS ISSUE OF CHOPTALK was mailed Oct. 22. The December issue will be mailed Nov. 21.

BEYOND BASEBALL

BY **PATTY RASMUSSEN**

Matt Diaz's wife, Leslee, at a baby shower given by Braves wives at Turner Field.

BABY TALK

PATTY RASMUSSEN

MATT AND LESLEE DIAZ WILL WELCOME THEIR SECOND CHILD during spring training in March. They have a son, **Nathan**, who will turn 1-year-old in December. **Leslee** and fellow expectant mom **Carmen Smith**, wife of Braves video coordinator **Rob Smith**, were "showered" by their fellow Braves wives on Sept. 22, in one of the large Lexus Level suites at Turner Field. Mountains of baby essentials and a few non-essentials, too, were given to both Leslee and Carmen, including an assortment of baseball-themed layette items given by **Allison Mahay**, **Ron Mahay**'s wife.

Allison is a co-owner of The Athlete's Child, a high-end baby boutique located in Arizona where the Mahay family lives in the off-season. Other co-owners include Red Sox wives **Kristin Mirabelli** (**Doug Mirabelli**) and **Karen Varitek** (**Jason Varitek**) and **Tatum Borowski**, wife of Cleveland Indians closer and former Brave **Joe Borowski** (1996-97).

Allison also presented baseball-themed "gifties" to **Peter Moylan**'s daughters, **Montana** (6) and **Matisse** (2 months), who arrived in Atlanta from Australia on Sept. 16. Montana was decked out in a personalized Braves/Moylan tank top, a baseball bracelet, and necklace that read, "My Dad Rocks!" The Athlete's Child has an excellent website (theathleteschild.com) with loads of baseball and other sports themed clothing.

THE BRAVES SIGNATURE EVENT held on Sept. 22 at the Cobb Sports Complex to benefit the Illien Foundation which supports an orphanage in Ethiopia raised a whopping $10,000-plus in just four hours of Braves participation. "We were shocked and thrilled by the response," said **Jessica Carlyle** (**Buddy Carlyle**), who spearheaded the campaign, along with other Braves wives and the owners of Cobb Sports Complex who were looking for a blockbuster event to celebrate their first anniversary in business.

The players involved - Carlyle, **Lance Cormier**, **Jeff Francoeur**, **Tim Hudson**, **Ron Mahay**, **Chris Woodward**, **Tyler Yates** and third base coach **Brian Snitker** - signed autographs for a minimum $10 donation and also provided signed memorabilia for auction. In addition to Jessica, other wives selling raffle and autograph tickets included **Jamie Cormier**, **Kim Hudson**, **Allison Mahay**, **Erin Woodward**, **Liezel Yates** and **Ronnie Snitker**. Local community businesses who also pitched in with matching donations included City Publication Franchise Group, ProCore Solutions, and On the Spot Trucking.

COBB SPORTS COMPLEX

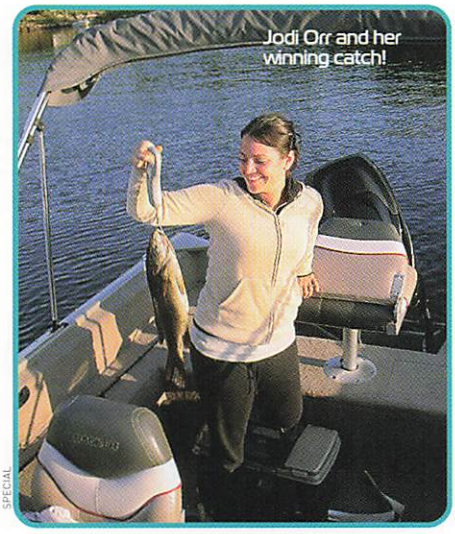
Chris Woodward autographs a bat for a young fan during the Braves Signature Event to benefit an orphanage in Ethiopia.

Jodi Orr, wife of **Pete Orr**, spent two weeks in early September at her family's cottage at Shadow Lake, one hour northeast of their home in Newmarket, Ontario. The family held their annual fishing tournament, and with her catch of a 3 1/2 pound smallmouth bass, Jodi emerged victorious! She was back in Atlanta for the final homestand of the season before she and Pete packed and headed north to their home in Canada for the off-season.

Pete will play winter ball in Venezuela for the Zulia Aguilas (Eagles) and will have a friend on the bench. Bullpen coach and Zulia native **Eddie Perez** will serve as the Aguilas bench coach. His family - wife **Marisol**, daughter **Maried** and son **Andres** - will visit during the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays.

John Smoltz ain't too proud to beg, especially on behalf of his favorite cause, the school he helped found, King's Ridge Christian School. Smoltz hosted 150 King's Ridge parents for dinner on Sept. 23, in order to ask them to participate in a drive to raise funds for a Student Life Center, viewed as a necessary addition to the King's Ridge campus, sooner rather than later.

The dinner, catered by Barnacles seafood restaurant, was set up on Smoltz's basketball court under a large, white tent. The tent was a fortunate feature since it began pouring rain soon after most people arrived. The rain con-



SPECIAL

tinued for 20 minutes, and large puddles developed around the sound system and buffet tables. When the rain finally abated, Smoltz and King's Ridge headmaster **David Rhodes** began clearing the standing water with push brooms. Later, Smoltz opened his after-dinner remarks by joking, "I'm **John Smoltz**. I'm running for mayor, and I need your support!"...

Once the Braves were officially eliminated from playoff contention, **Jeff Francoeur** began planning his part of his Nov. 3 wedding festivities, beginning with a bachelor party/golf weekend at a home in Charleston, S.C., Oct. 5-8. "There will be about 12 guys on the trip," said Francoeur. The guest list for the Charleston trip included teammates and long-time friends **Brian McCann** and **Clint Sammons**, both of whom will serve as groomsmen in the nuptials.

Francoeur was also in charge of planning the honeymoon for he and his bride, **Catie McCoy**. "We're going to the Four Seasons in Mexico, and then we'll spend 11 days at the Atlantis resort," he said. The couple's rehearsal dinner was held at Turner Field's 755 Club, and in another touch of Atlanta, a pre-wedding family dinner was catered by the Varsity, an Atlanta landmark known for their chili dogs, onion rings and frosted orange drinks!...

Bobby and **Pam Cox** took a little getaway weekend to New York City immediately following the season. They're also taking a trip to Mexico in January...

Chipper Jones enjoyed several days of R&R at his Double Dime Ranch in southwest Texas following his valiant run at the National League batting title. Chipper's parents, Larry and Lynne Jones, traveled to Atlanta for the final Braves homestand, Sept. 16-23, and were also in attendance for the Braves' season-ending series at Houston...

Off-season travels for members of the Braves include a trip to Hawaii for **Andruw** and **Nicole Jones**, **Tim** and **Kim Hudson**, and former Brave **Mark DeRosa** and his wife, **Heidi**. The three couples will visit Maui in mid-November. The Hudsons also plan to visit **Tyler** and **Liezel Yates** at their home in Kauai. For two weeks this summer, rock and roll guitar legend **Carlos Santana** rented the Yates' beautiful Kauai home, seen by ChopTalk readers in the December 2006 issue...

Reliever **Joey Devine**, originally from Junction City, Kansas, purchased a town house in Roswell, just north of Atlanta. Devine said he planned to stay close to his new home this off-season, except for a quick trip to the mountains of North Carolina to visit his girlfriend's family...

Another player now calling Atlanta his hometown is Austin, Texas, native **Kelly Johnson**, who had 25 family and friends at a game during the final weekend in Houston. Johnson will marry **Lauren Thacker** in January...

It was great seeing former Braves wives **Rena Millwood** (**Kevin**) and **Kristine Cather** (**Mike**) at the Glavine luncheon. Rena, mother of two boys, is a restaurant owner of Wild Wing Café in Gainesville, Ga., north of Atlanta, and Kristine, who has three children, continues her successful real estate business in Atlanta.

PATTY RASMUSSEN

From left Ronnie Snitker, Lisa Hanger, Denise Clark, Jodi Orr, Kim Hudson, and Kim's friends Amber Fitzwater, Angel Casterline and Marci Manning.

HOUSEGUESTS

BRAVES WIVES **Kim Hudson** (**Tim**), **Nicole Jones** (**Andruw**), **Jodi Orr** (**Pete**) and **Ronnie Snitker** (**Brian**) attended **Chris Glavine**'s (**Tom Glavine**) annual charity luncheon on Sept. 29. The event, "A Tribute to Our Quiet Heroes," honored mothers of children with cancer, including two of the guests at Kim's table - **Denise Clark**, who lost her son, **Josh**, to cancer in June, and **Lisa Hanger**, whose daughter, **Anna**, started one of Kim's favorite charities, Anna's Angel Fund. The Tribute to Our Quiet Heroes luncheon benefits CURE Childhood Cancer and was held at the Westin Buckhead hotel. In addition to an extensive silent auction, the event featured a live auction with one item: A day-long, off-season visit to the Glavines' home in Atlanta and personal pitching instruction from the 303-game-winner himself. After a starting bid of $2,000, the amount quickly rose to $10,100 which was soon raised by another bid of $10,200. At that point, Chris offered a day with the Glavines to both bidders! In the three years since the initial luncheon, Chris' efforts have raised over $500,000 to combat childhood cancer.

TALKIN' CHOP

LETTERS & PHOTOS FROM OUR READERS

WHETHER YOU'RE HAVING FUN AT TURNER FIELD, EXPERIENCING A CLOSE ENCOUNTER WITH YOUR FAVORITE BRAVES PLAYER, OR JUST SHOWING OFF YOUR COLLECTION OF BRAVES STUFF OR TRYING ON YOUR NEW BRAVES SHIRT, WE WANT TO HEAR ABOUT IT AND SEE A PICTURE.

THANKS, CHOPTALK!

During the week of Sept. 24-28, Jones Elementary School in Gainesville, Ga., held its fourth annual Braves Week to celebrate another great Braves season. ChopTalk donated magazines that were used in classrooms for instructional activities, for reading materials, and as school-wide prizes for classes who correctly answered Braves trivia questions.

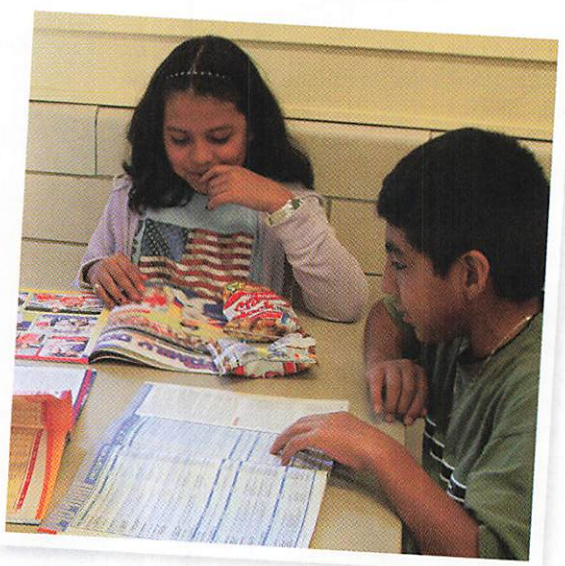
Jacquie Parker's second-grade class found baseball contractions and compound words in issues of ChopTalk. They also enjoyed a concession stand party where the students set up a ballgame environment and sold tickets, programs, ChopTalk magazines, and concession stand items to each other to reinforce counting and exchanging money. The students watched a prerecorded Braves game as they enjoyed their concession stand snacks.

Emily Williams' fourth-grade class used ChopTalk and the Atlanta Braves' website to research the players' batting averages and used these averages as an instructional activity.

I gave every student in my class that correctly answered my Braves trivia question a ChopTalk to take home, and they were absolutely thrilled.

Jones Elementary sends out a big "Thanks!" to ChopTalk for its generosity and a great big "Go Braves in '08" from their biggest fans!

KELLEY TRIPPE
Jones Elementary
Gainesville, Ga.



CHOPTALK AND THE ATLANTA BRAVES SUPPORT OUR TROOPS

LATE BLOOMER

I've been an avid Braves fans since they arrived in Atlanta. This is a picture of my good friend, Leila Taylor. We're neighbors, and she is 93 years old and becoming an avid fan, too. We've been watching games together for three years, and we wouldn't think of missing one. May the Braves have many more years of success!

LARRY ABBOTT
Easley, S.C.

POETIC ESCAPE

My son had to write a poem for his English class. It was a big surprise to me, because he has never written poems before. We just found out that his father has Hodgkin's lymphoma. My son's greatest love is baseball. Ever since he could hold a ball, he's wanted to play, and he wants to play for the Braves. His poem expresses these events and sentiments and how much Chipper Jones has impacted his life. He plays for Ola High School in McDonough, Ga., and this is his only escape that helps him deal with watching his dad fight cancer. He doesn't talk much about it, but the poem shows how hard it is on him. I just want to thank Chipper for giving my son a dream all these years.

LYNN DAVIES
McDonough, Ga.

SHARE YOUR BRAVES FEVER!

WRITE TO US

Talkin' Chop c/o ChopTalk
P.O. Box 80750
Conyers, Ga. 30013-8750

Letters@ChopTalkonline.com

Letters and photos chosen for publication are subject to editing, and photos cannot be returned. Digital photos are preferred. Home inkjet prints are not high enough quality for us to publish.

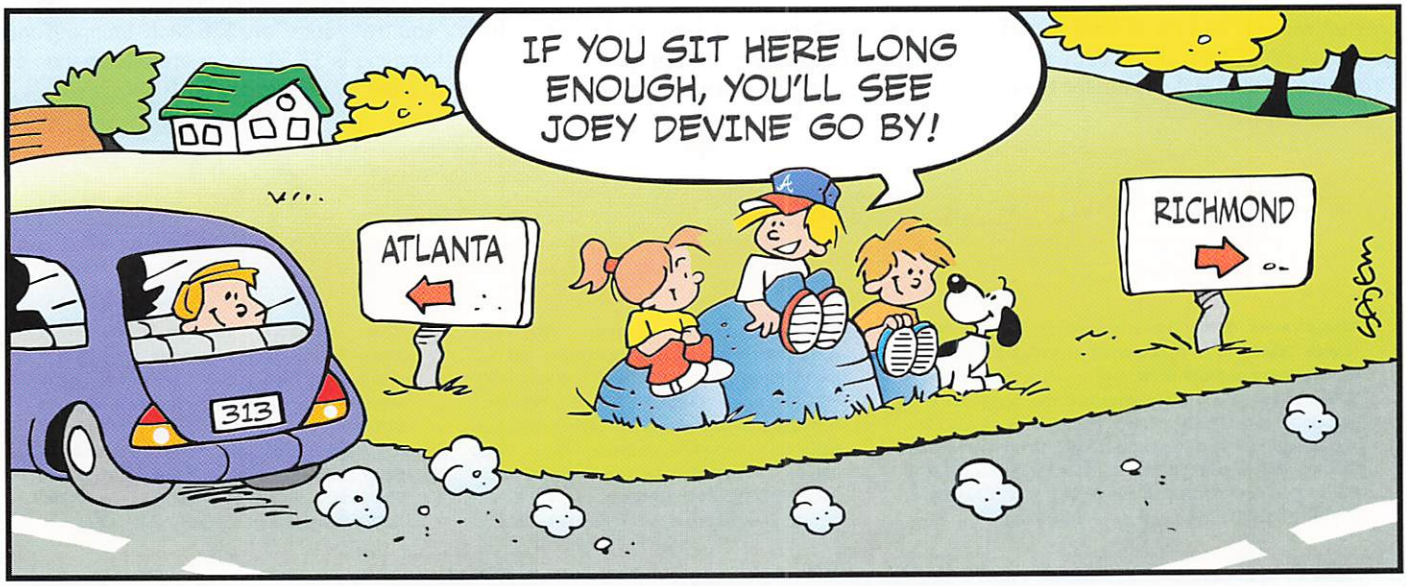
WRITE THE BRAVES

Atlanta Braves
P.O. Box 4064
Atlanta, Ga. 30302

For the Braves players, Bobby Cox, the coaches, broadcasters, or members of the front office.

If you request a response, be sure to include a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Never send anything of value that you want returned. This is no guarantee of a reply.

RECALLED 6 TIMES!



WHITE HOUSE INSIDERS

IN JOHN SCHUERHOLZ'S COLUMN in the October ChopTalk, he wrote about the behind-the-scenes tour of the White House and private meeting with President Bush that he experienced with John Smoltz, Tim Hudson, Brian McCann and Jeff Francoeur during the Braves' final trip to Washington in mid-September.

Because the trip was so close to the October deadline for ChopTalk, we weren't able to get a photo in time... But we never quit trying, and here's the proof - Schuerholz and his entourage of stars posing for the camera in the White House Blue Room (R).

The Blue Room is the center of the State Floor of the White House and is the place where presidents formally receive guests.

SPECIAL

Presidential guests (L-R) Brian McCann, Tim Hudson, John Schuerholz, Jeff Francoeur and John Smoltz.

BOSTON FAITHFUL GATHER

With the Arizona Diamondbacks fighting to advance in the National League playoffs, Roland Hemond - the D-backs' special assistant to the president - still managed to get to Boston Oct. 7 for the 16th annual reunion of the Boston Braves Historical Association (BBHA). The highly regarded Hemond, a long-time executive with several big league teams, was rewarded by being inducted into the Boston Braves Hall of Fame that is administered by the BBHA.

Hemond's long and illustrious career started with the Boston Braves' farm team in Hartford, Conn. He rushed to the Brookline (Mass.) Holiday Inn for the BBHA event from Chicago, where the Diamondbacks swept the Cubs to advance to the NLCS against Colorado.

Other highlights of the sold-out event of 200 fans included remarks by former Braves greats Johnny Logan (SS, 1951-61) and Al Dark (SS, 1946, '48-49, '60), as well as the first visit to the affair by Roy Hartsfield, a Boston Braves second baseman from 1950-52, and the first manager of the Toronto Blue Jays.

Following long-standing tradition, the event began with a tour of the remains of Braves Field, housed on what is now the campus of Boston University.

Among those in attendance were former major leaguers Art Johnson (LHP, 1940-42), Len Merullo (SS, Cubs), Norm Roy (RHP, 1950) and Bill Monbouquette (RHP, Red Sox, Tigers, Yankees, Giants).

- Bob Brady

MURPHY'S BOOK

Fans interested in purchasing a copy of Dale Murphy's "The Scouting Report" that was featured in last month's ChopTalk should visit thescoutingreport.net. Copies of Murphy's book for "professional athletics" are $30 apiece, and copies of the version for "youth athletics" are $20 each. Shipping and handling is $3.50. For more information or to order by phone, call (801) 380-9694.

FAN CLUBS

BRAVES 400 CLUB

The Braves 400 Club is the official fan club of the Atlanta Braves. It is a non-profit organization dedicated to supporting baseball at all levels. Annual membership is $25 and includes a newsletter and the opportunity to participate in activities such as road trips, luncheons, the annual banquet, and charitable events. Send payment to: Braves 400 Club, P.O. Box 7689, Atlanta, Ga. 30309. For more information, call the organization's hotline at (770) 416-4539 or visit www.braves400.org.

MILWAUKEE BRAVES HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

The Milwaukee Braves Historical Association is a non-profit organization that promotes the memory of the Milwaukee Braves (1953-65). Annual membership is $25 and includes a newsletter. Send payment to: Milwaukee Braves Historical Association, c/o Express News, W130 N10437 Washington Dr., Germantown, Wisc. 53022. For more information, call (414) 347-1212 or visit milwaukeebraveshistoricalassociation.com..

BOSTON BRAVES HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

The Boston Braves Historical Association is a non-profit organization dedicated to keeping alive the memory of the Braves in the city where the franchise began in 1871 and that it represented through 1952. Annual membership is $15 and includes a newsletter. Send payment to: Boston Braves Historical Association, P.O. Box 5668, Marlboro, Mass. 01752. For more info, call (508) 485-1423

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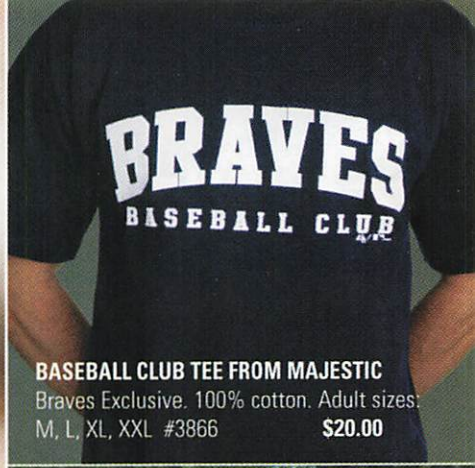

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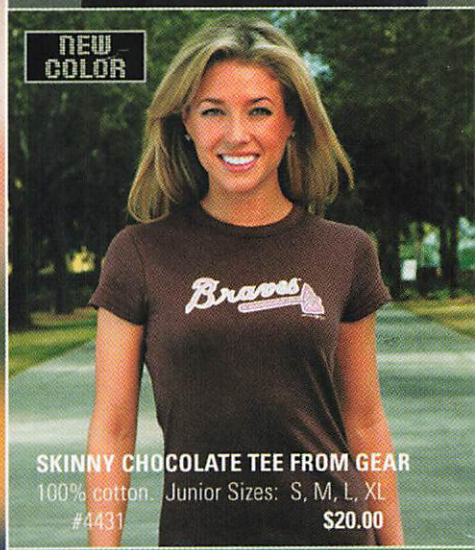

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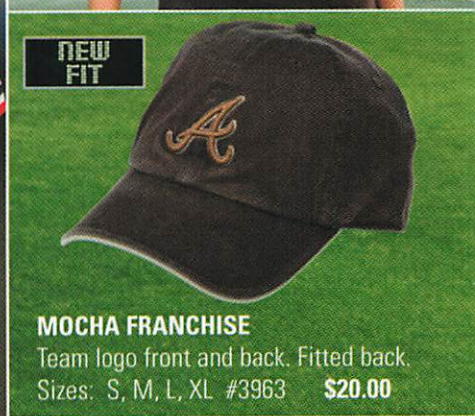

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Cotton-twill. Adjustable plastic strap. #58 **$15.00**

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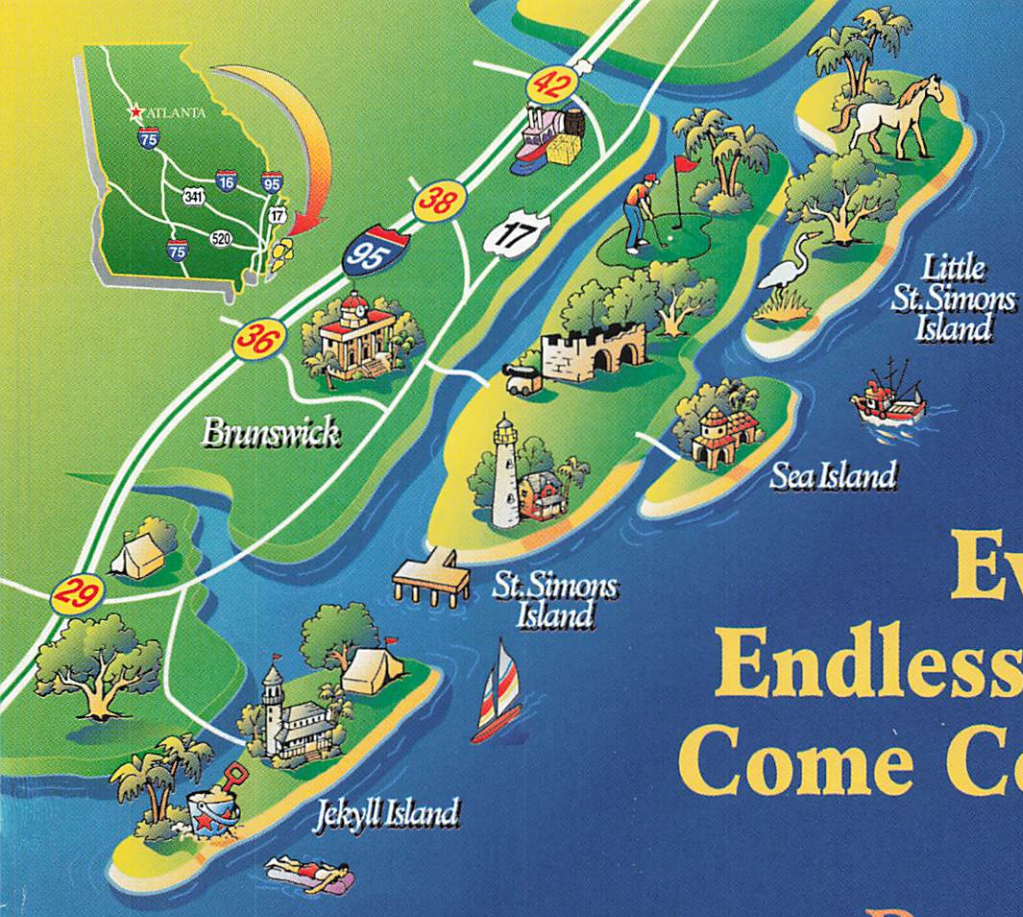

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